



TRESE 2

UNREPORTED
MURDERS

Budjette Tan KaJo Baldisimo

ABLAZE

NETFLIX

A NETFLIX ORIGINAL
ANIME SERIES

TRESE 2 UNREPORTED MURDERS

Budjette Tan KaJo **Baldisimo**

WRITER
BUDJETTE TAN
ARTIST
KAJO BALDISIMO

FOR ABLAZE
MANAGING EDITOR
RICH YOUNG
EDITOR
KEVIN KETNER
DESIGNER
RODOLFO MURAGUCHI

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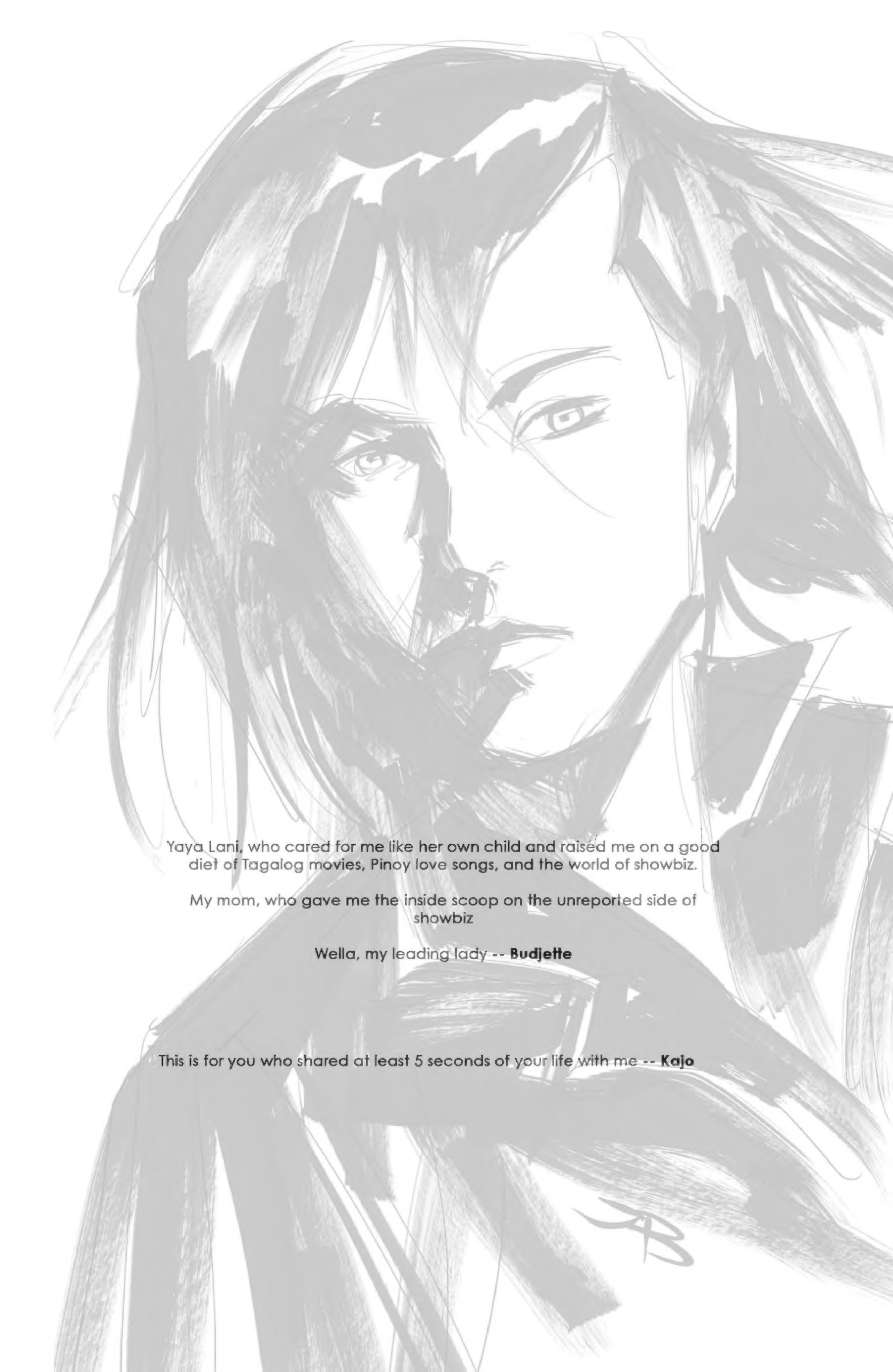
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Yaya Lani, who cared for me like her own child and raised me on a good diet of Tagalog movies, Pinoy love songs, and the world of showbiz.

My mom, who gave me the inside scoop on the unreported side of showbiz

Wella, my leading lady -- **Budjette**

This is for you who shared at least 5 seconds of your life with me -- **Kajo**

“5, 6, 7, 8... (Joining the Chorus Line of the Damned)” an introduction by David Hontiveros

Though the first thought that usually pops into people's heads when you say the words “comic book” is “superheroes,” spandex-clad champions of justice aren't the only subjects of today's four-color (or black-and-white) comic world.

Horror also represents a long and revered tradition in the medium. The EC comics of the 50's, the horror anthology titles of DC in the 70's, the advent of titles like *Hellblazer* and *Sandman* in the latter 80's, which paved the way for the Vertigo line of comics, also from DC.

Horror has likewise been a staple of long-standing in local *komiks*, alongside melodramatic romances and our own superheroic capes and masks.

In many ways, that dark and winding road has led us here, to *Trese*.

Ostensibly the episodic narrative of one Alexandra Trese, club owner and police consultant, *Trese* reads like one of those TV police procedurals with a twist.

In this case, the twist is that the cases Alexandra gets called in on are the strange ones, the cases that are far from regular, cases which involve ghosts and spectres and zombies and all sorts of ill-mannered creatures from Philippine lower mythology.

Taken in a certain light, *Trese* seems to be the very modern grandchild of our own local horror *komiks*, hip to the ways and trappings and popular culture of the 21st century.

But perhaps more crucial than being the latest step in the evolution of the Philippine horror comic, *Trese* is also the crucible in which writer Budgette Tan and artist Kajo Baldisimo are taking their own forward steps in their own artistic evolutions.

Though I am decidedly partial to serialized narratives, the beauty of the episodic is that each single story is a golden opportunity to try something new, whether it be an untried story structure, narrative device, or story form.

The writer isn't beholden to running subplots or a particular narrative voice, instead free to explore uncharted territories in the service of a good story.

And Budj is doing exactly that, following, as I suspect, in the footsteps of one of his own literary heroes, writer Warren Ellis, who, in *Planetary* made homage to—and in some cases, critical commentaries of—everything from Japanese monster movies to Vertigo comic books to hardboiled Hong Kong cinema to classic pulp action heroes.

Kajo meanwhile, is delivering some truly excellent artwork, reveling in the stark chiaroscuro of Alexandra's world, an urban cityscape enshrouded in sinister shadow. Kajo's *Trese* panels are unbounded by lines, as if to visually suggest (as Budj's scripts make quite plain) the impending threat of intrusion by the supernatural.*

Kajo also letters and does layout, which are arts in and of themselves. No mean feat, the body of impressive work these gentlemen continue to accumulate.

The volume you hold in your hands compiles issues 5 to 8, and includes one of my two favorite *Trese* stories thus far (issue 5, "A Little Known Murder in Studio 4," which not only has a neat double meaning in its title, it also contains a very potent thread of tragedy and some great Philippine lower mythology moments), another in which Budj tips his proverbial hat a number of times to yours truly (issue 7, "Embrace of the Unwanted," in which *Full Moon Massacre* actually hit the big screen and got a rating of Five Iguanas!), and another (issue 8, "The Association Dues of Livewell Village," which carries on in the fine tradition of Shirley Jackson) in which I get to be immortalized. Sort of.

And lest it feel underappreciated, issue 6 ("The Outpost on Kalayaan Street ") is Budj's homage to zombie cinema, bizarrely enough, one of today's horror genres *du jour*. (Back in the glorious Romero heyday, I never imagined movie zombies would ever be so ubiquitous.)

This volume also ends on a particular note, which, if I'm not mistaken is what will ultimately tie *Trese*'s first 13 issues together with a big black satin bow.

When I first began to see what Budj was doing with *Trese* (and that he had chosen the episodic route), I tossed in my two cents: have a narrative undercurrent that runs through the issues. Have the stories lead up to something, instead of just being 13 unrelated cases in Alexandra's files. If I recall my conversation with Budj, I believe he said I wasn't the only one to make that suggestion.

At this point, I think that's what I see at the end of this volume, the definite indication of that something.

Personally, I can't wait to get there, to see it in all its hideous glory.

Now, I'd like to talk more about the issues themselves, get into the gristly meat of them, but some people actually read the introduction first, before getting to the stories proper; it wouldn't do for me to spoil it for those who haven't come across these cases before, either on dead trees or via the Infobahn.

So I'll just say this: I'm honored Budj asked me to write the introduction to one of the *Trese* compilations, and I'm glad it was for this volume. Now, for those who've been here before, you know the drill, and for the uninitiated, I'll just let you wander on in, largely unaware of what awaits.

Not to worry, the Kambal've got you covered.

Carpe noctem and all that Latin jazz,

Dave H.

Paranaque, Metro Manila

March 13, 2008

** It's interesting to note though that Kajo's art style takes a different path with Trese 8, and whether this is a permanent change or solely for that particular issue remains to be seen...*

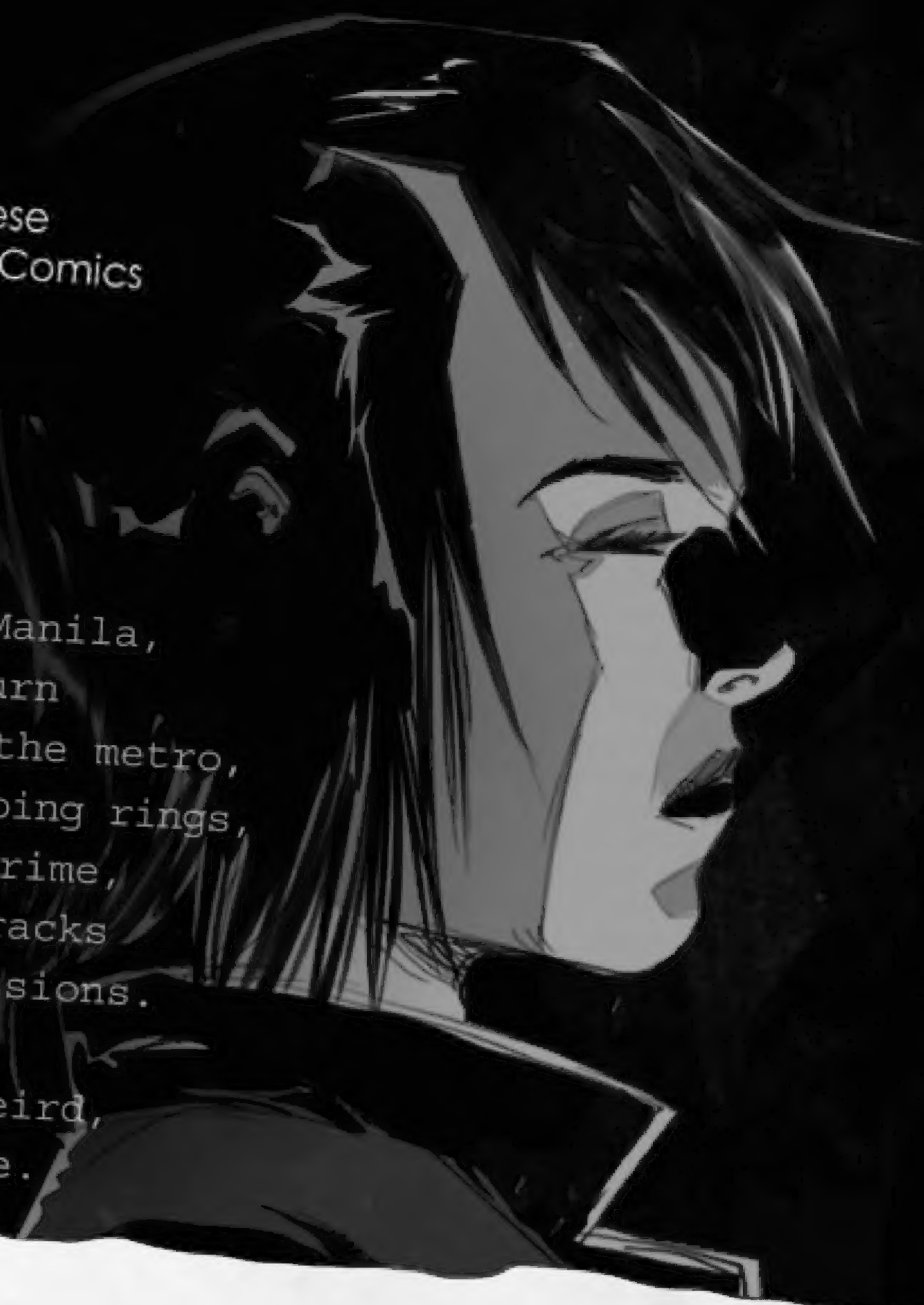
David Hontiveros is the Palanca Award-winning, National Book Award-nominated writer of the SEROKS science-fiction collections and the Penumbra horror/dark fantasy novellas. He's the co-creator/writer of the Alejandro Pardo chronicles and the writer/publisher of the 'Verse comics line (including the DAKILA and KADASIG titles). He recently contributed stories in TRESE: Bloodlines Vol 1. He can occasionally be spotted (like an online Bigfoot) at fiveleggediguana.blogspot.com.

BLOG: www.tresecomics.com
TWITTER: <https://twitter.com/AlexandraTrese>
FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/TreseComics>

TRESE

When the sun sets in the city of Manila,
don't you dare make a wrong turn
and end up in that dimly-lit side of the metro,
where aswang run the most-wanted kidnapping rings,
where kapre are the kingpins of crime,
and engkantos slip through the cracks
and steal your most precious possessions.

When crime takes a turn for the weird,
the police call Alexandra Trese.



BUDJETTE TAN Writer/Creator of TRESE

Budjette has been writing comic books since the 90s and has been working in advertising during the 2000s. He currently works for the LEGO Agency. Aside from TRESE, he is the writer and co-creator of the award-winning comic book "The Dark Colony: Mikey Recio and the Secret of the Demon Dungeon." He co-wrote two books about the creatures of Philippines myth and folklore: "The Lost Journal of Alejandro Pardo" and "The Black Bestiary." He now lives in Denmark with his wife and son, where there are no aswang - or so they think.



KAJO BALDISIMO Artist/Creator of TRESE

KaJo is a fan and avid reader of Filipino komiks from the 80s and 90s. He is a storyboard artist by day and comic book creator by night working on TRESE and his self-published zine called *Walong Kwentong Walang Kwenta*. After living in Manila for forty years, he is now permanently residing in Davao City, south of the Philippines, where he, together with his wife and son, is beginning to establish an animal shelter.



Imperial Films Presents
HEATHER EVANGELISTA



Cha ng Bituin

A Little Known Murder in Studio 4



Mother Ignacia

Tomas Morato Avenue

Epifanio de los Santos

St. Williams Hotel

LAMU

Imperial Films Presents
HEATHER EVANGELISTA



Luha ng Bituin

THE NOVA AURORA STORY

AGA BAUTISTA - HILDA LOCSIN - HERBERT MARTINEZ
RIO ROMERO - JC LAUCHENCO - CHANDA MARTIN
CARMINA ISABEL LOPEZ - RAYMOND BONIN
WILLIAM MUHLACH - GINA KORONEL - MARIA DE
DIRECTED BY JOSE

"THEY SHOT THE LAST
SCENE TODAY."

"THE PRODUCERS WERE
RUSHING IT FOR THE
FILMFEST."

WELL,
WITH THIS LATEST
DEVELOPMENT, IT'LL
DEFINITELY MAKE A
KILLING AT THE
BOX OFFICE.

DIRECTOR



AND THIS
WAS MISS
EVANGELISTA'S
DRESSING
ROOM?

YES, SIR.

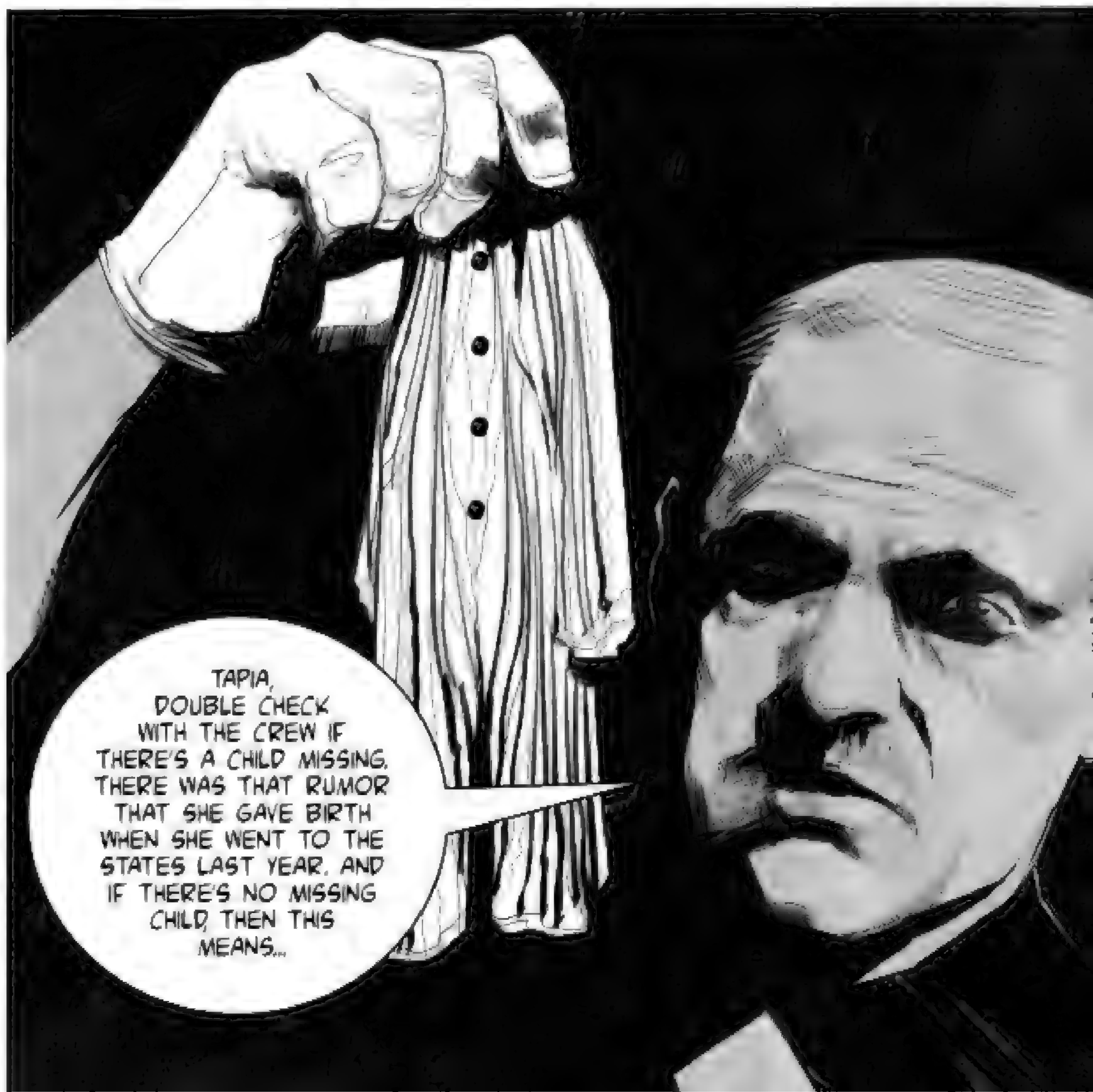
CHOCNUT?
I THOUGHT HER
MANAGER SAID SHE
WAS ON A STRICT
DIET.



YES, SIR.



OH NO.



TAPIA,
DOUBLE CHECK
WITH THE CREW IF
THERE'S A CHILD MISSING.
THERE WAS THAT RUMOR
THAT SHE GAVE BIRTH
WHEN SHE WENT TO THE
STATES LAST YEAR. AND
IF THERE'S NO MISSING
CHILD, THEN THIS
MEANS...



THIS
MEANS YOU'RE
GOING TO CALL
MS. TRESE?

GLAD TO SEE
YOU'RE GETTING
USED TO HOW I DO
THINGS AROUND
HERE, TAPIA.



OF COURSE,
I'M GOING TO CALL
HER. AND UNTIL SHE
GETS HERE, KEEP THIS
AREA SEALED OFF,
EVEN FROM THE
SOCO.



HELLO,
ALEXANDRA. CAN
YOU COME TO...

OH,
I'M SORRY.
ARE YOU
BUSY?



CAPT. GUERRERO,
I WAS JUST ABOUT
TO CALL YOU. WE JUST
FIGURED OUT WHO'S
HEADING THE NEW
KIDNAPPING RING
IN ONGPIN.





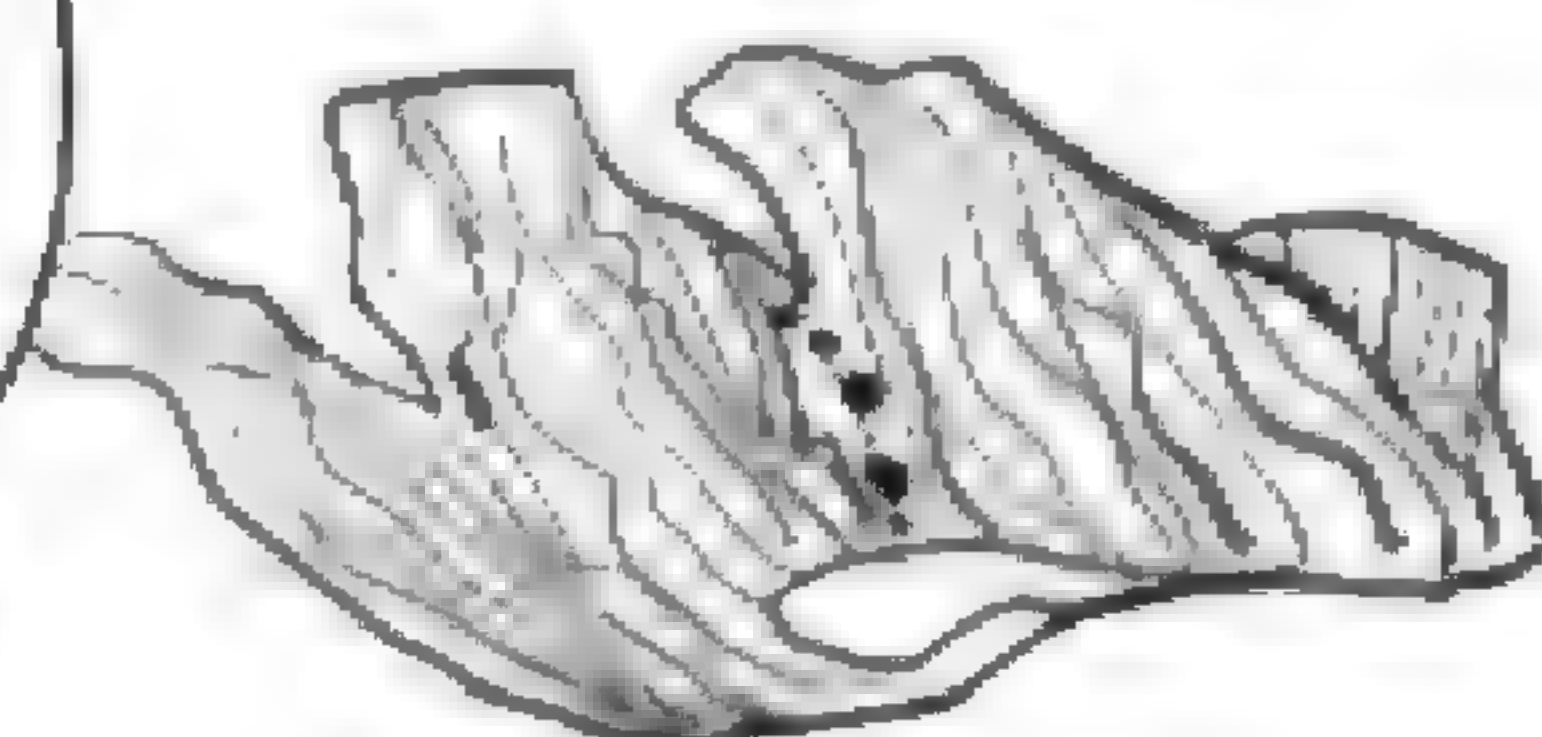
"ALEXANDRA, WHEN YOU'RE DONE THERE, PLEASE
MEET ME AT ABC-ZNN, IN STUDIO 4"



WHEN I
SAW THIS, I HAD
A FEELING I WAS
LOOKING AT ANOTHER
CRIME SCENE. MAYBE
A CHILD COULD'VE BEEN
KIDNAPPED. OR MAYBE
A MIDGET. OR
MAYBE...



OR MAYBE IT
WAS JUST LIKE
THAT CASE YOU
AND MY FATHER
HANDLED BACK
IN 1977?



UHHH, YEAH.
IT WAS ONE OF
THE FEW TIMES I
ACTUALLY GOT TO
SEE THEM. I ALWAYS
THOUGHT DUWENDE
WOULD BE SMALLER,
SMALL ENOUGH TO
STAND ON YOUR
SHOULDER.



THIS
RED DUST IS
UNUSUAL. THEY'RE
SUPPOSED TO
TURN INTO COAL
OR DIRT WHEN
THEY DIE.



THE
DUWENDE'S
HOME IS NOT
HERE... DID YOUR
MEN FIND A
POTTED PLANT
OR FLOWER
IN HERE?





ACCORDING TO
ETHEL DOMINADOR,
EVANGELISTA'S PA,
HEATHER USUALLY
BROUGHT A BONSAI TO
ALL HER SHOOTINGS,
RECORDINGS, AND
TV GUESTINGS.

HER
BEST ACTRESS
AWARD IS ALSO
MISSING.

I'M GOING
TO TALK TO NOVA
AURORA. SHE WAS ONE
OF THE LAST PEOPLE TO
SEE EVANGELISTA ALIVE.
SHE ALSO HAPPENS TO
BE A CHOCNUT-A-HOLIC.
EATS A WHOLE BAG
BY HERSELF.

YOU WANT
TO COME
ALONG?

I'LL
FOLLOW. I
JUST NEED TO
MAKE A QUICK
STOP OVER.



NEAR THE INTERSECTION OF
BALETE AND 13TH STREET.

TABI-TABI PO.
GOOD EVENING
PO.

HELLO,
LITTLE TRESE.
WHAT BRINGS YOU
BACK? LADIES IN
WHITE CAUSING YOU
TROUBLE?



NO.
NOT AT ALL.
SOMETHING ELSE.
I FOUND THIS AT
A PLACE WHERE
A DUWENDE
DIED.



AAAA.
RED DUST.
CRIMSON. BLOODY.
DUWENDES TURN TO
RED DUST WHEN THEY ARE
KILLED BY SOMEONE THEY
LOVE. OR WHEN SOMEONE
WHO LOVES THEM KILLS
THEM. BUT WHY WOULD
THEY, IF THEY LOVED
THEM IN THE FIRST
PLACE?



I ALSO
FOUND
THIS.



SWEETS.
DUWENDES LOVE
SWEETS. THEY ARE
PAYMENT, REWARD,
BRIBE FOR THE
DUWENDE TO DO
DEEDS AND...



THIS
SWEET IS
NOT AS SWEET
AS I THOUGHT.
IT IS FILLED WITH
PAIN, SADNESS,
SO MUCH
OF IT.



I
MUST GO.
I SUDDENLY
MISS MY
MATE.



AS
ALWAYS,
BE CAREFUL
WHERE YOU
TREAD, LITTLE
TRESE.



DASMARINAS VILLAGE.
NOVA AURORA'S MANSION.

HER MAIDS
FOUND HER
LIKE THIS.



WHAT'S SHE
SINGING?



IT'S THE
THEME SONG OF
HER MOVIE 'ANG
HULING HIMALA'. IT
WAS THE LAST TIME
SHE EVER WON AN
AWARD FOR
ANYTHING.



THE
MAIDS TOLD
ME, OKAY? IT'S
NOT LIKE I'M
A FAN.



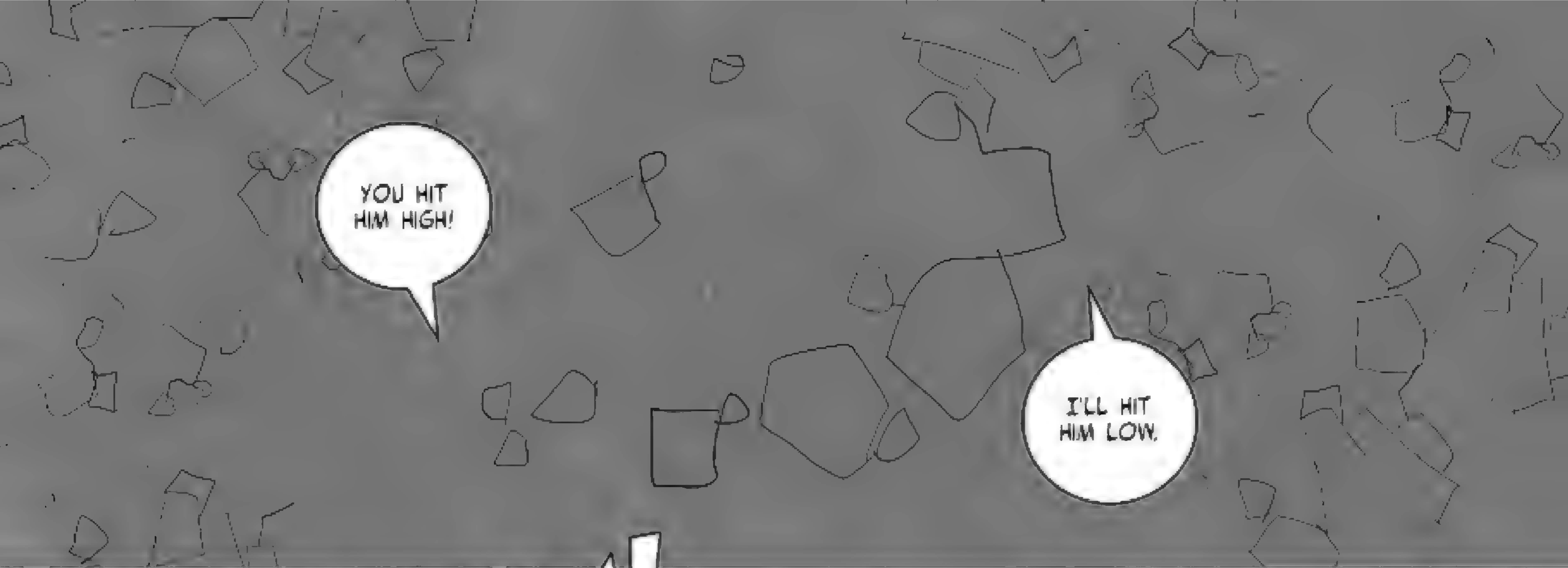
HE'S GONE
AND IT'S ALL
MY FAULT.

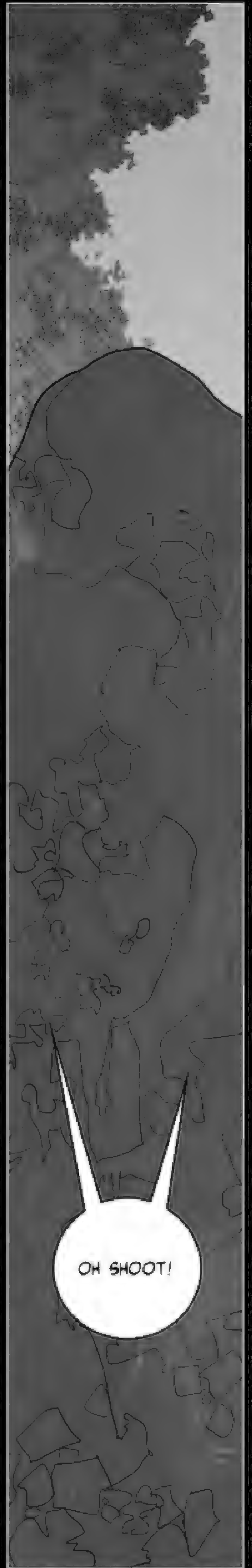
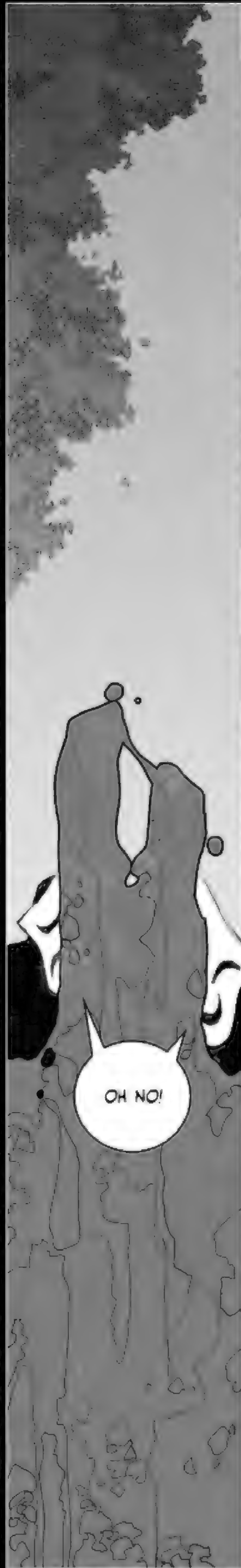
"I'LL BE AT THE GARDEN IN THE BACK.
I'LL NEED THE BONSAI, A BASIN OF
WATER AND A WHITE CANDLE."

"WHATEVER HAPPENS, WHATEVER YOU
HEAR, DON'T DO ANYTHING. MAKE
SURE YOUR MEN STAY AWAY."











I CALL UPON
THE SPIRIT OF THIS
DUWENDE. BEFORE YOU
BECAME EARTH, BEFORE
YOU CRUMBLed--
RISE AGAIN! I ASK
PERMISSION TO SPEAK
WITH YOU.



THE RED WAX SLOWLY
TAKES SHAPE.



IT RISES OUT OF THE WATER
AND STRETCHES, LIKE IT JUST
CAME OUT OF A VERY
DEEP SLEEP.







GOOD
EVENING. ARE
YOU NOVA'S
HANDLER? OR
HEATHER'S?

BOTH.

THEY
WERE BOTH
MY FAMILIARS,
MY ALAGA, WHICH
WAS A STUPID
THING TO
DO.

"I DISCOVERED NOVA WHEN SHE
WAS JUST A TEENAGER. SHE
KEPT JOINING ALL THESE
SINGING CONTESTS AND
JUST KEPT LOSING."

"SHE WAS LOVELY. SO,
I DECIDED TO LEND
HER A HAND."

"THE NIGHT SHE WAS HAILED
CHAMPION, I INTRODUCED
MYSELF AND SAID I WAS
THE ONE THAT HELPED HER
WIN. TOLD HER I WANTED
TO GROOM HER, MAKE
HER A STAR."



BAGONG
KAMPION

HALAN ng



"SHE ACCEPTED."



I'D LOVE TO
TELL YOU ABOUT
ALL OUR GREAT
VICTORIES, BUT
WE DON'T HAVE
MUCH TIME,
DO WE?

NO
SIR, I'M
AFRAID WE
DON'T.



"TWO HUSBANDS AND
SEVERAL BOYFRIENDS
LATER, SHE LOST HER
PASSION TO ACT
AND SING."

"SHE JUST WANTED THE
FAME, THE MONEY AND
THE DRUGS."



"SO, I STOPPED HELPING HER.
EVEN IF SHE BROUGHT ME A
MOUNTAIN OF CHOCOLATES,
I DID NOTHING."

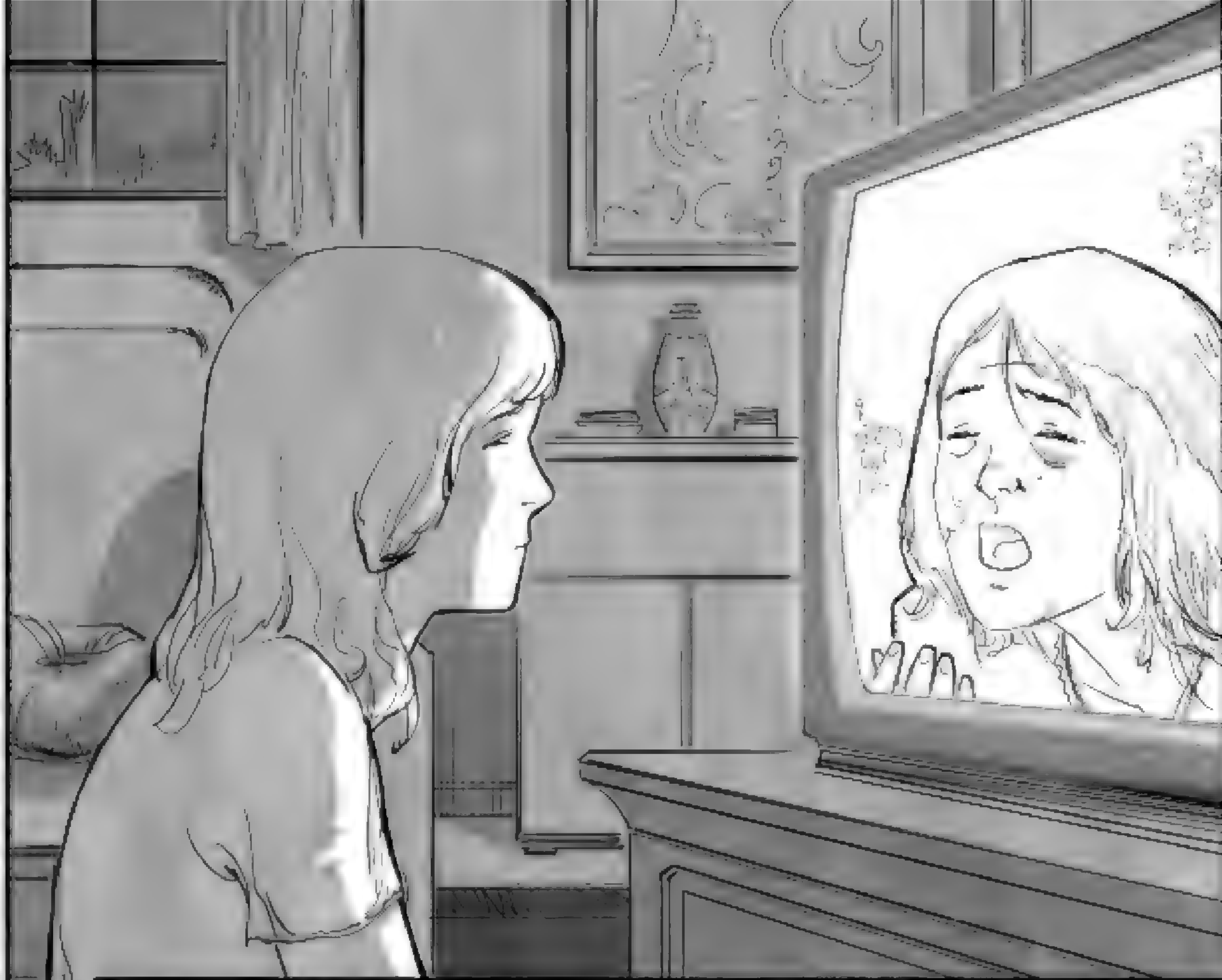


"THEN THIS PROJECT CAME, THIS MOVIE ABOUT HER
LIFE. HEATHER CAME HERE TO MEET NOVA."

"SHE'D COME HERE
AND WATCH NOVA'S
OLD MOVIES, UNTIL
SHE MEMORIZED
ALL HER LINES AND
ALL HER SONGS."

"THE MORE SHE
PRACTICED, THE
MORE SHE BECAME
JUST LIKE NOVA."

"THE MORE I FELL
IN LOVE WITH HER."



"SO, I SHOWED MYSELF
TO HEATHER AND TOLD
HER I'D GROOM HER,
BUILD HER CAREER,
MAKE HER A STAR."

"SHE ACCEPTED."

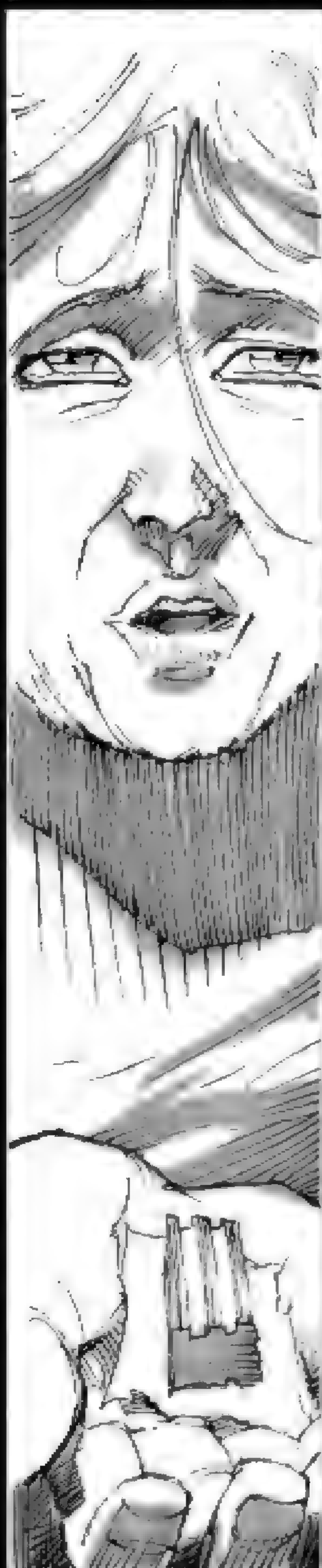


"I TOLD HER TO GET
MY HOUSE, WHICH NOVA
ALWAYS KEPT AT
HER BEDSIDE."

"THAT NIGHT, I MADE SURE NOVA
WAS SOUND ASLEEP, DREAMING
OF WINNING ANOTHER AWARD
THAT SHE WASN'T GOING
TO GET."



"LAST NIGHT, NOVA
CAME TO THE SET
AND BEGGED ME
TO COME BACK."



"I COULDN'T SAY YES.
BUT I ALSO WANTED
TO GRANT HER ONE
LAST WISH."

"SO I TOLD HER I'D
NEVER GO BACK,
NEVER RETURN TO
HER."



"I KNEW THAT IF
I SAID THAT, SHE'D
TURN HER ANGER
TO HEATHER. I
JUST DIDN'T THINK
SHE'D HAVE THE
STRENGTH TO
KILL HER."



"I ALSO DIDN'T
EXPECT THAT ONE
OF HER TEARS
WOULD FALL INTO
THE CHOCOLATE
SHE OFFERED ME.
I TASTED IT AS
SOON AS I BIT
INTO THE CHOCNUT."



I
TASTED HER
HATE. I TASTED
HER SADNESS. I
TASTED HER DESPAIR,
AND IT FILLED ME
SO MUCH THAT
IT KILLED
ME.



ON THE STAND, AS SHE PLEADED HER CASE, SHE ONCE AGAIN MADE THE AUDIENCE CRY. EVEN THE JUDGE COULD NOT HELP BUT SHED A TEAR.

AS SHE WRAPPED UP HER SPEECH, SHE PAUSED AND LET THE CAMERAS SNAP AWAY, LIGHT BULBS FLASHED AND TV CAMERAS RECORDED HER GREATEST PERFORMANCE.

I ONLY WANTED TO MAKE ALL OF YOU HAPPY.

IF THAT IS A CRIME, THEN...

I AM, GUILTY!

THE WHOLE COURTROOM BURST INTO APPLAUSE.

NOVA LOOKED AT EACH AND EVERYONE IN THE AUDIENCE AND SMILED.

THEN EVERYTHING STARTED TO FADE.

DOCTORS SAID THAT NOVA SUFFERED A STROKE.



MONTHS LATER, ON
THE FIRST DAY OF
THE FILMFEST...



Imperial Films Presents
HEATHER EVANGELISTA

OH WOW,
SHE'S SO
PRETTY!



Imperial Films Presents
HEATHER EVANGELISTA

Luha ng Bituin
THE NOVA AURORA STORY
AGA BAUTISTA - HILDA LOCSIN - HERBERT...
RIO ROMERO



Imperial Films Presents
HEATHER EVANGELISTA

I WISH I
WERE FAMOUS
LIKE HER.



COMING SOON,
THE NEXT BIG
SUPERSTAR.







FROM THE JOURNAL OF PROF. ALEXANDER TRESE

September 28

The Duwende

They're tiny old men with long white beards, who wear pointy hats and pointy shoes - is the common description of these dwarven creatures. As most stories go, they live in a palace underneath the earth where they keep a treasure trove of gold and precious gems. If you try to steal from them, the moment you step out of their kingdom, the gold will turn into coal or rocks.

As it turns out, these are half-truths. Duwende are capable of casting a glamour spell that can make themselves look more appealing, depending on who they're talking to.

Based on our encounters with the duwende clan, they do reside in a system of caves and tunnels under the city, but it is anything but palatial. Again, such stories might be based on the glamour that was placed on visitors which made them see an extravagant abode.

These earth elementals are very territorial. They are very loyal to their individual clans. Most of them live in groups, as compared to the solitary nature of the nuno, who share very similar features and traits with the duwende.

From the stories we have gathered, they are quite fond of interacting with human affairs. They have invited some children to visit and stay with them in their underground realm. Others have opted to live with specific people, using their magicks to enhance the skills and fortunes of these chosen ones, making their business more profitable or their careers more successful. Some have even aided in unlocking certain supernatural abilities in people that have allowed them to heal or harm others.

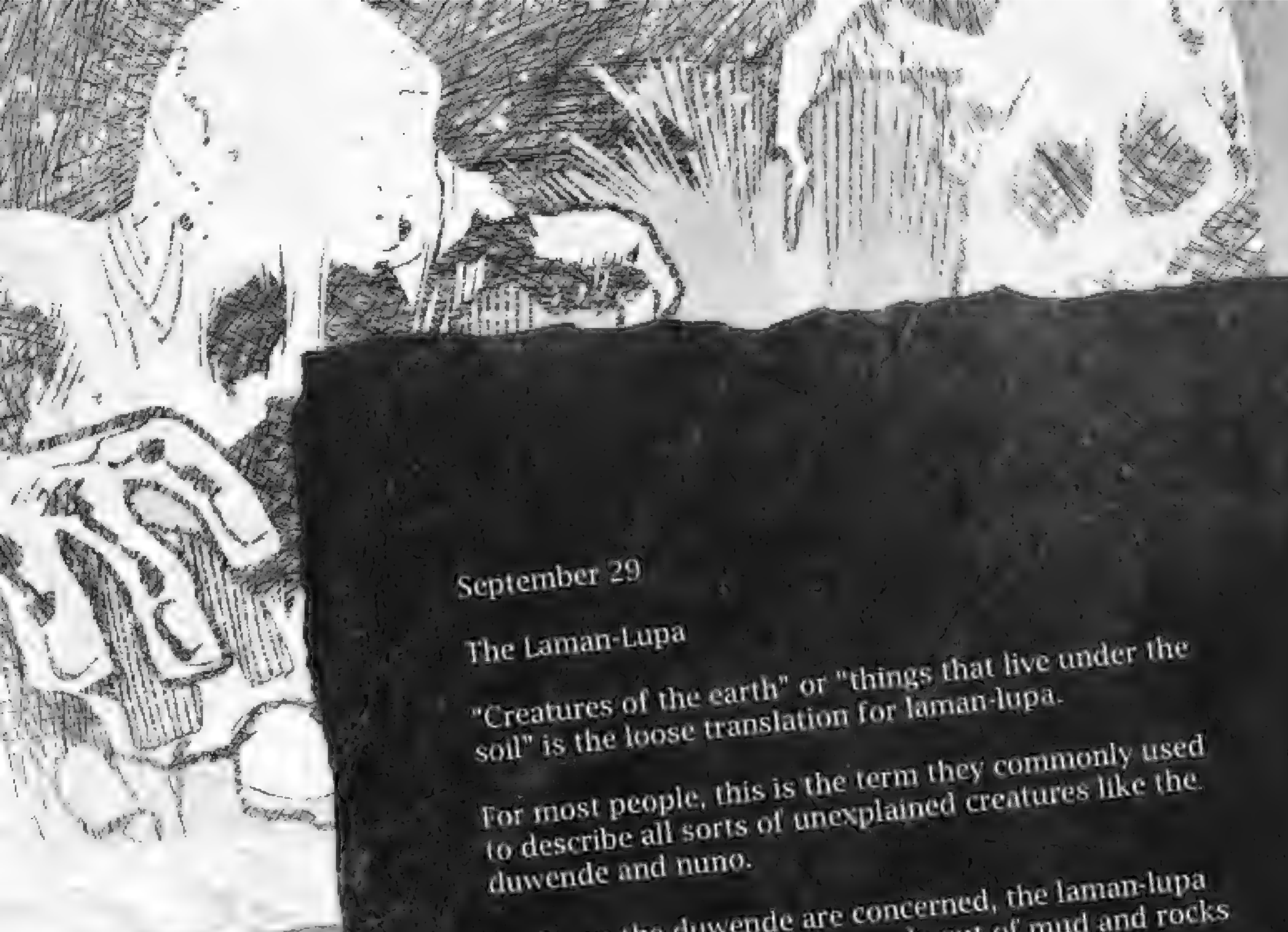
The duwende can also control their loyal LAMAN LUPA, golem-like creatures made of mud and muck.

We've discovered that the duwende have a preference for sweet food. With the right kind of chocolate, one can appease the duwende and even ask them for information and favors.

We were able to win the friendship and confidence of Amang Paso and his clan, when we helped them win their battles with the clan of the black duwende of Tatang Lagim.







September 29

The Laman-Lupa

"Creatures of the earth" or "things that live under the soil" is the loose translation for laman-lupa.

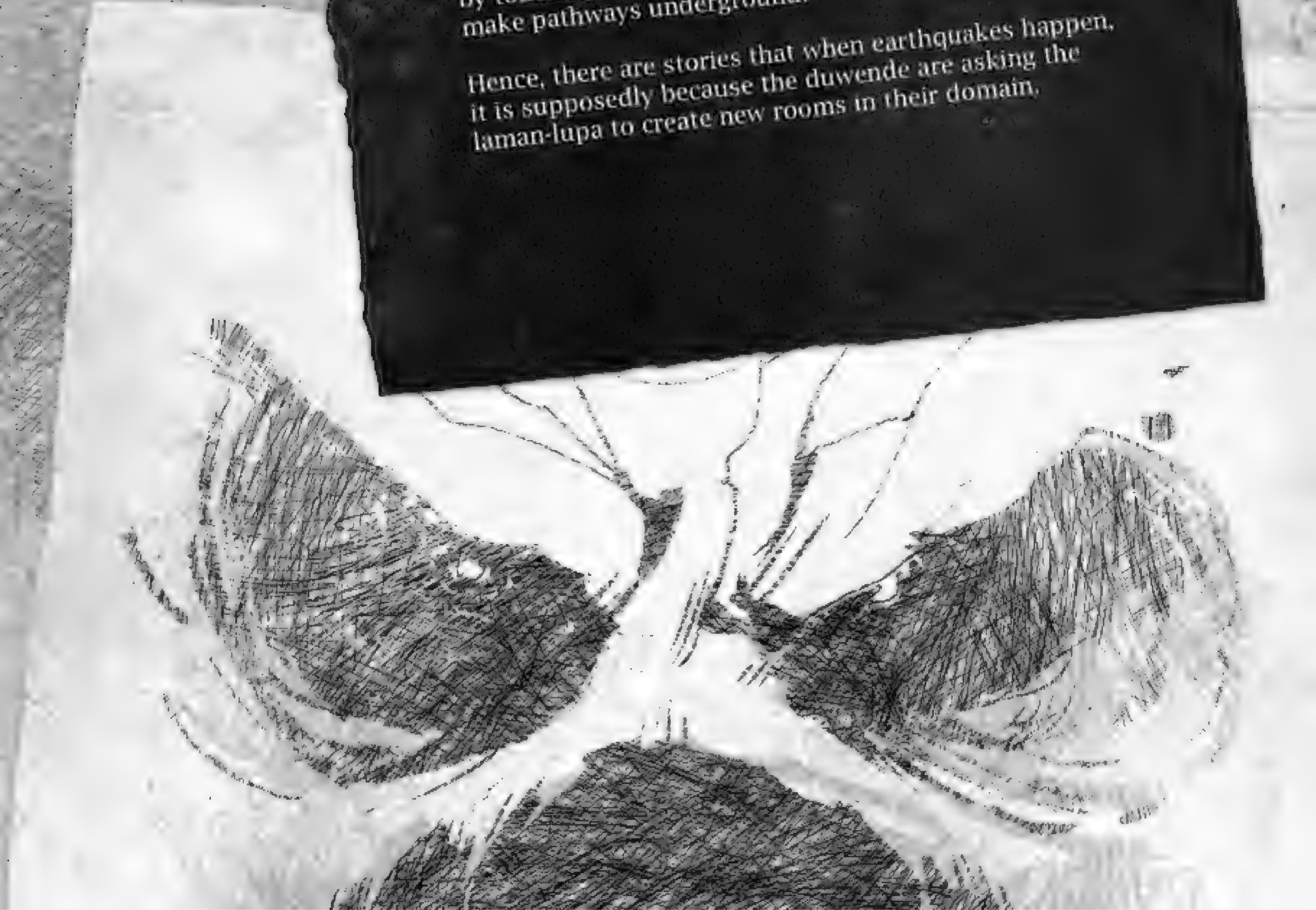
For most people, this is the term they commonly used to describe all sorts of unexplained creatures like the duwende and nuno.

As far as the duwende are concerned, the laman-lupa are these earth elementals made out of mud and rocks and whatever is in their surrounding land.

They co-exist with the duwende in their kingdom of caves and tunnels, serving as ever-loyal workers and if need be, their soldiers, when it comes to protecting their land.

The laman-lupa have the ability to move the earth just by touching it, which allows the duwende to quickly make pathways underground.

Hence, there are stories that when earthquakes happen, it is supposedly because the duwende are asking the laman-lupa to create new rooms in their domain.





February 23

The Manananggal

We have encountered aswang that have shown shapeshifting abilities, allowing them to grow bat-like wings or sharp talons like a bird of prey.

Compared to most aswang that's capable of flight, the manananggal has one of the most unique transformations. Its name is derived from the word "tanggal," which means "to separate."

When it goes out to hunt, the manananggal will separate its upper torso from the lower body. It will then sprout leathery wings and fly up to the night sky while its entrails dangle from underneath it.

It seeks out pregnant women and will feed on the unborn fetus by using its long, snake-like tongue to suck out the baby from the mother's womb.

The manananggal is typically impervious to conventional weapons. One way to injure it would be to use an iron blade or bolo.

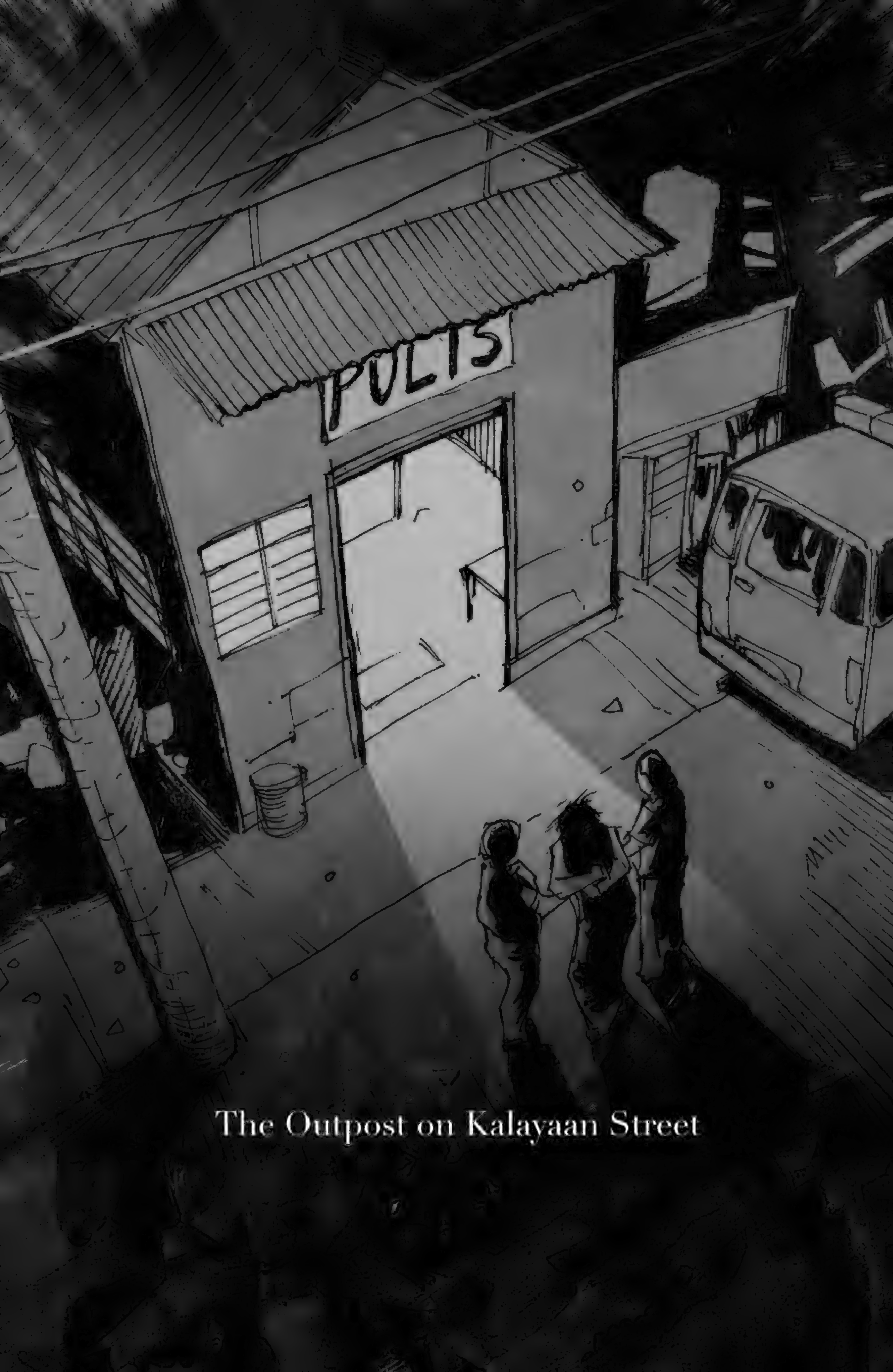
The more efficient way to defeat it would be to find its lower torso, sprinkle salt or garlic on it, which would prevent the upper half from reattaching itself.

Later on, the manananggal would die once it gets exposed to the rays of the rising sun.

While our initial studies showed that manananggal are solitary hunters, we have reports that the ones that moved to the city have started to congregate and now hunt as a flock.







The Outpost on Kalayaan Street



Kalayaan Avenue

This is a grayscale aerial photograph of a city street grid. The image is tilted at an angle. Two main streets are labeled: 'Kalayaan Avenue' runs diagonally across the upper middle, and 'Metropolitan Avenue' runs diagonally across the lower left. The grid consists of numerous rectangular blocks. The labels are in a light, sans-serif font.

Metropolitan Avenue

2:13 AM

KALAYAAN STREET,
MAKATI CITY



SGT. GREGORIO REVILLA HAS BEEN
STATIONED AT THIS OUTPOST
FOR THE PAST NINE YEARS.



HE RETIRES IN SIX MONTHS.
HE DOESN'T LOOK FORWARD
TO IT. HE LIKES BEING IN
CHARGE OF THE KALAYAAN
OUTPOST. NOT MUCH
HAPPENS HERE.

THERE'S THE OCCASIONAL
HOLD-UPPER OR SNATCHER
THAT COMES THEIR WAY.



MOST TIMES, THEY JUST
DEAL WITH THE DRUNKS
THAT GET TOO LOUD AND
OBNOXIOUS AND CAN'T
FIND THEIR WAY HOME.



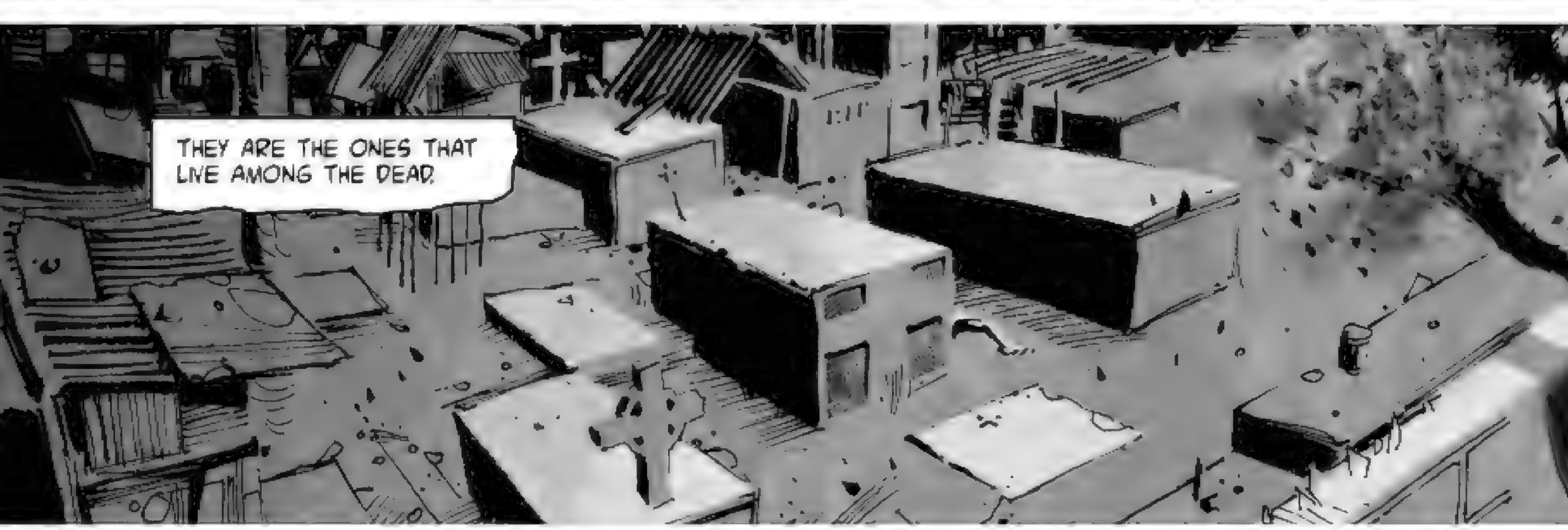
NOT MUCH HAPPENS WHERE YOU'RE STATIONED AT THE
OUTPOST OVERLOOKING THE MANILA SOUTH CEMETERY.





THE ENTIRE CEMETERY COVERS
OVER FIVE CITY BLOCKS.

IT IS CONSIDERED HOME BY
OVER 50 FAMILIES LIVING IN
MAKE-SHIFT HOUSES.



THEY ARE THE ONES THAT
LIVE AMONG THE DEAD.



MAKE A LIVING BY
TAKING CARE OF
THE DEAD.

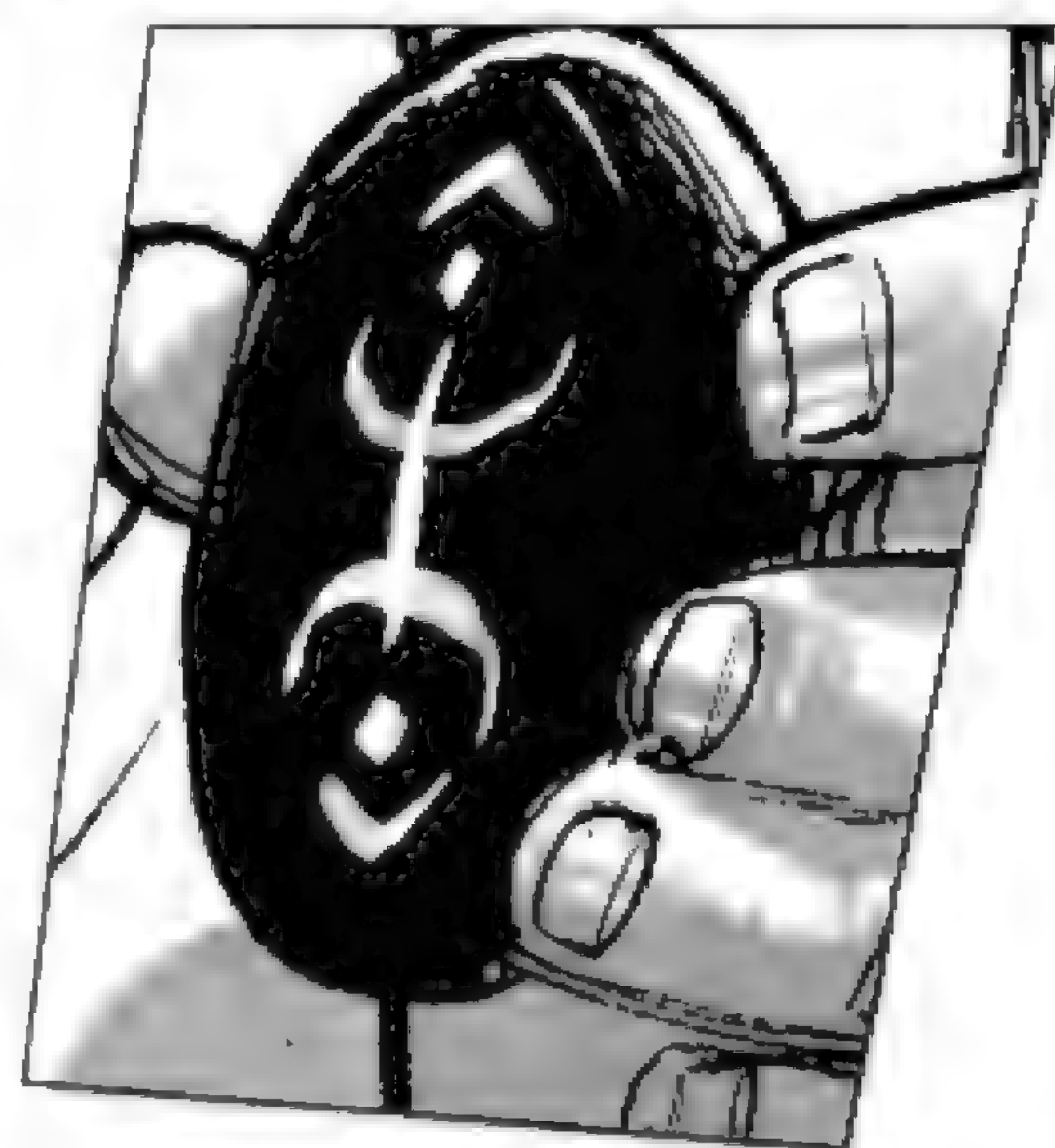


AND SOME FIND
THEMSELVES JOINING
THE DEAD ALL TOO
SOON.





SENDING TO TRESE...

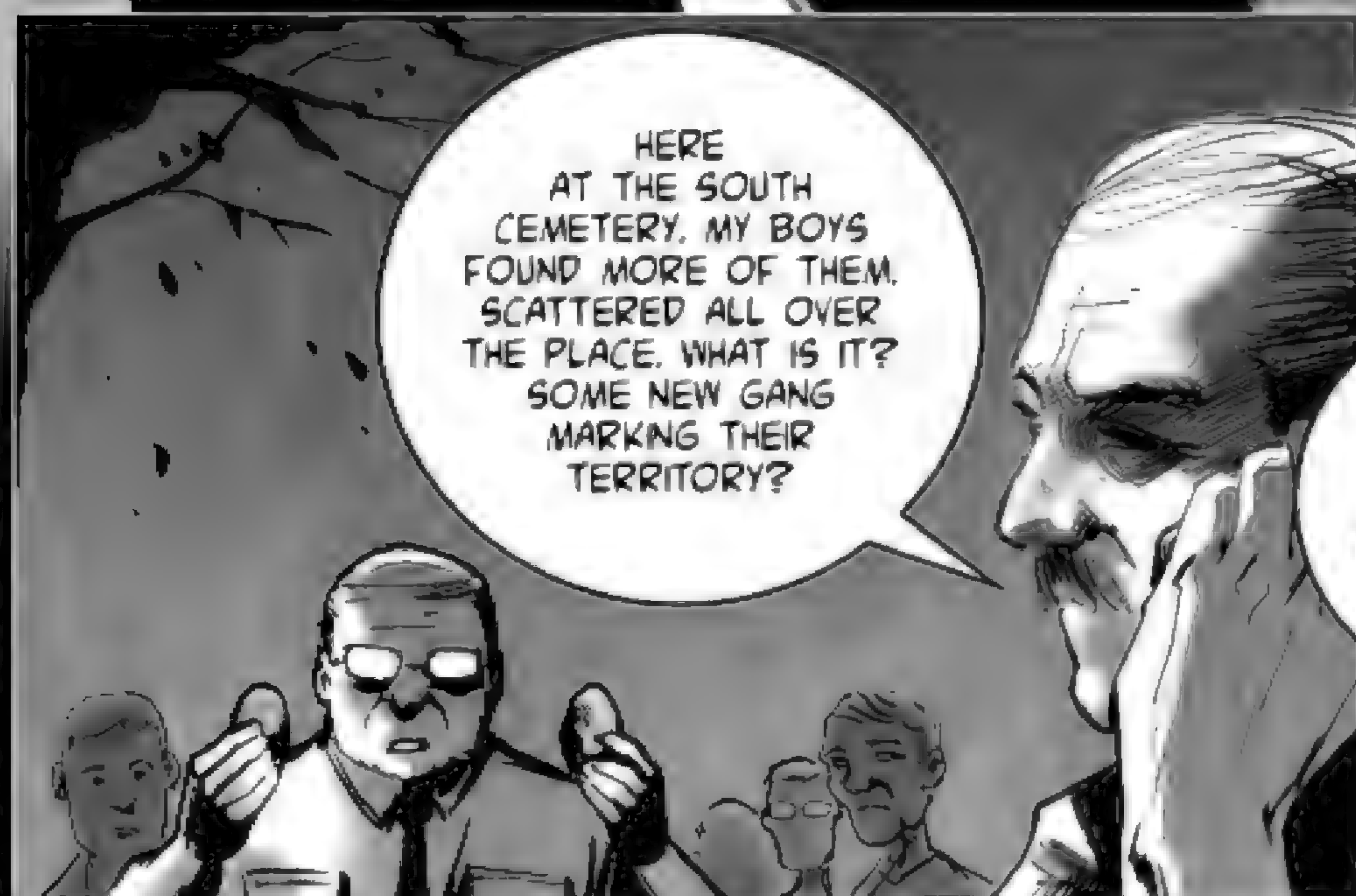




AND JUST WHEN SHE
THOUGHT SHE WAS
DONE FOR THE NIGHT,
THE NIGHT DECIDES
IT'S NOT DONE
WITH HER.



CAPTAIN!
WHERE DID
YOU FIND THIS
STONE?



HERE
AT THE SOUTH
CEMETERY. MY BOYS
FOUND MORE OF THEM.
SCATTERED ALL OVER
THE PLACE. WHAT IS IT?
SOME NEW GANG
MARKING THEIR
TERRITORY?



GET
OUT OF
THERE NOW!
EVACUATE THE
PLACE OF ALL
CIVILIANS!



WHY?
WHAT IS
IT?

IT'S A
BUHAY NA BATO!
A SUMMONING
STONE! I'M ON
MY WAY!

BOYS!
GET THE CAR!
A FREAKSHOW'S
COMING TO
TOWN.







SSRRRRRGNTRRR SSRRRRNTRRRR

I WANT
ALL AVAILABLE
UNITS IN THE CITY!
HERE! NOW! BLOCK
ALL EXITS OF THE
CEMETERY!

BLAM!

"WHAT'S TAKING ALEXANDRA
SO LONG?"

SSRRRRNTRRRR SSRRRRRGNTRRRRRRR SSRRRRNTRRRR

GAH!

EEEEEEE!

NAY!

AAAAA!







SSSSRRRRRGNNNNNTRRRRRRRRRVRRRRRVV



BACK INSIDE THE CEMETERY...

TAPIA! WHERE ARE THE--

KLIK KLIK KLIK

OH NO.

GAH!?

BACK INSIDE THE CEMETERY...

TAPIA! WHERE ARE THE--

KLIK KLIK KLIK

OH NO.

GAH!?

BACK INSIDE THE CEMETERY...

TAPIA! WHERE ARE THE--

KLIK KLIK KLIK

OH NO.

GAH!?

BACK INSIDE THE CEMETERY...

TAPIA! WHERE ARE THE--

KLIK KLIK KLIK

OH NO.

GAH!?

BACK INSIDE THE CEMETERY...

TAPIA! WHERE ARE THE--

KLIK KLIK KLIK

OH NO.

GAH!?





GOOD
EVENING, CAPTAIN.
WE GOT HERE
AS FAST AS
WE COULD.

BLAM!

BLAM!

BLAM!

BLAM!



4:04 AM

HELLO,
ALEXANDRA?



GO AHEAD,
CAPTAIN. WHAT'S
THE STATUS
REPORT?



"ALL CIVILIANS
HAVE BEEN
EVACUATED.
ALL EXITS ARE
BLOCKED BUT..."

"BUT NO ZOMBIES
ARE COMING OUT
OF THE EXITS."



SO,
WHERE ARE
THEY ALL
GOING?





"I WANT A BIRD'S EYE VIEW
OF THE SITUATION."



BOSSING,
LOOKS LIKE
SOMEONE PAINTED
A WHOLE LOT OF
THE GRAVESTONES
AND TOMBS TO
POINT TOWARDS
ONE SECTION OF
THE CEMETERY.



"AND ALL THE ZOMBIES ARE HEADING TOWARDS ONE BUILDING ON KALAYAAN STREET."

"CAPTAIN, YOU NEED TO
GET WHOEVER YOU CAN
SPARE TO THAT SPOT."







GO
AWAY!



GO
AWAY!



GAAHHH!

SGT. REVILLA,
MY NAME IS
RAUL LAZARO.
YOU KILLED
MY BROTHER.

HIS NAME
WAS BENJAMIN
LAZARO. HE WAS
ONLY 13 YEARS OLD.
HE DIED ONE BLOCK
AWAY FROM THIS
OUTPOST.





HE
GOT HELD UP
BECAUSE OF HIS
SECOND-HAND
CELLPHONE. HE
CRIED FOR HELP.
NONE OF YOU
CAME.



YOU ONLY
CAME OUT AFTER
THE HOLD-UPPERS
SPED AWAY ON THEIR
MOTORCYCLE. BUT I
FOUND THEM AND
DEALT WITH
THEM.

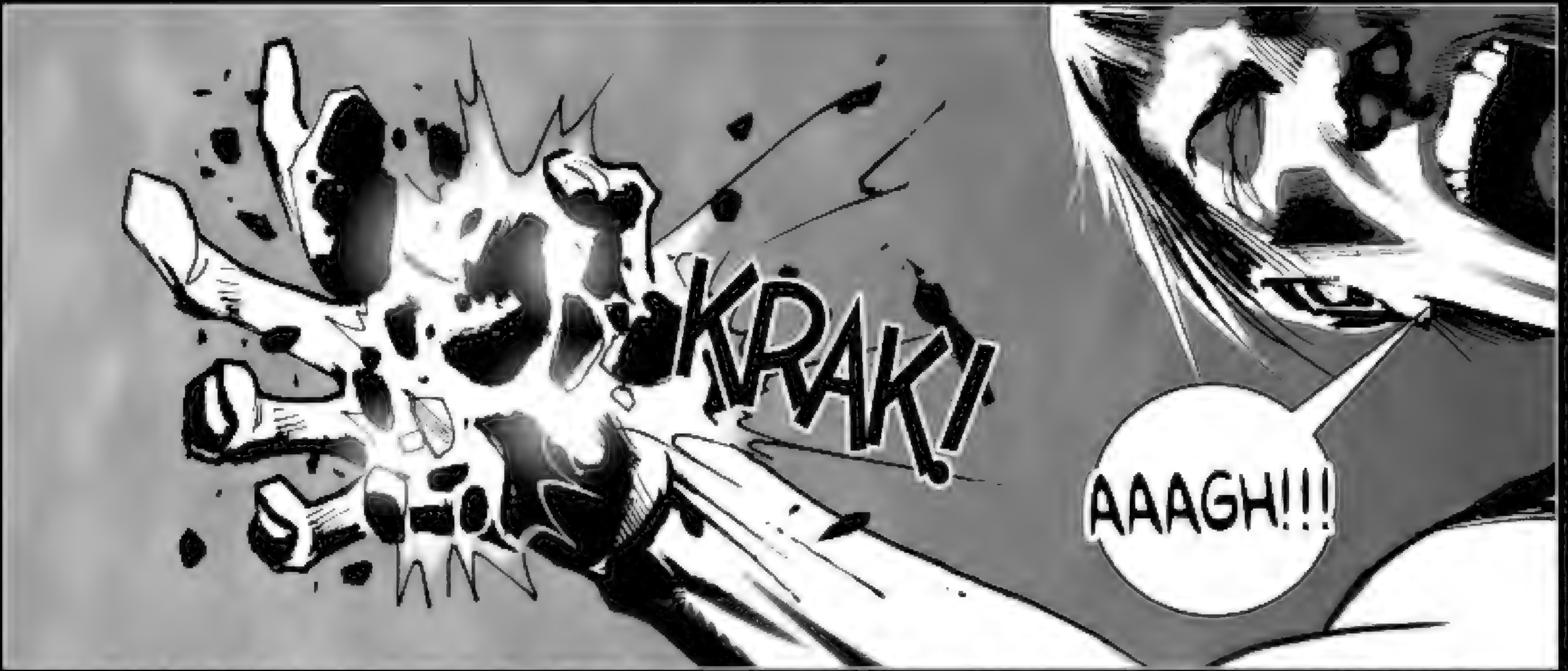


YOU DIDN'T
DO ANYTHING,
SGT. REVILLA.
DIDN'T DO YOUR
JOB. DIDN'T
CARE.



I
DEMAND
JUSTICE.





4:59AM

SO, YOU'RE GOING TO TELL THE PRESS THIS WAS A GANG WAR? HOW WILL YOU EXPLAIN ALL THE UNEARTHED GRAVES?

WE CAN ALWAYS SAY THEY WERE HIGH ON DRUGS. THAT ALWAYS WORKS.

"MAKE SURE LAZARO DOESN'T GET ANY DRAWING IMPLEMENTS. NOT EVEN PAPER AND PENCIL."

"WHAT ABOUT REVILLA?"

"DON'T GIVE HIS BADGE BACK. ELSE THE UNDERWORLD WILL MAKE SURE IT FINISHES WHAT LAZARO WASN'T ABLE TO DO."

SOMETIMES, I WISH YOUR DAD PUT TOGETHER A RULE BOOK ABOUT HOW THIS WHOLE UNDERWORLD WORKS.

IT'S QUITE SIMPLE, REALLY. ALL THOSE LESSONS ABOUT SHOWING RESPECT AND HELPING OTHERS STILL APPLY.

"THE CONSEQUENCES OF DISOBEYING THOSE RULES ARE JUST A LITTLE MORE DIRE."

"THE UNDERWORLD IS NOT AS FORGIVING AS OTHERS."





March 4

Buhay-na-Bato

This so-called "living stone" is created by a salamangkero (sorcerer), which can be used to summon and control the undead.

From our research, the stones are taken from the peak of Mt. Cristobal, which is known to be the domain of several malevolent entities and creatures.

During the night of the new moon, a stone is chosen and a sigil is inscribed on it. A black boar is sacrificed and the stone is left in the boar's mouth until sunrise. Throughout the night, the salamangkero should continue chanting his spell. By sunrise, the stone is charged, so to speak, and possesses the power to wake the dead.

A novice salamangkero would be able to summon one undead soldier and use it as a bodyguard or as a hitman. The gangster known as Bhoy Bankay used to have a dozen undead henchmen do his bidding.

A master salamangkero would have the skill to summon a whole graveyard.

We have since installed eldritch checkpoints, with the help of the duwende clan, that would alert us if anyone tries to smuggle a buhay-na-bato into the city. I can only hope we've set up enough to completely monitor all possible routes.





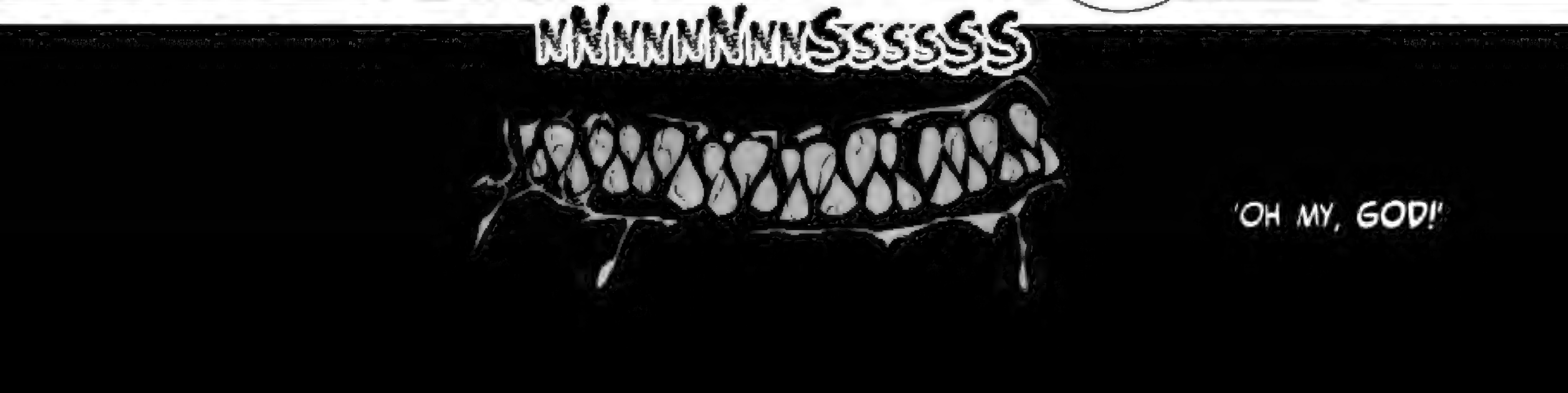






Embrace of the Unwanted







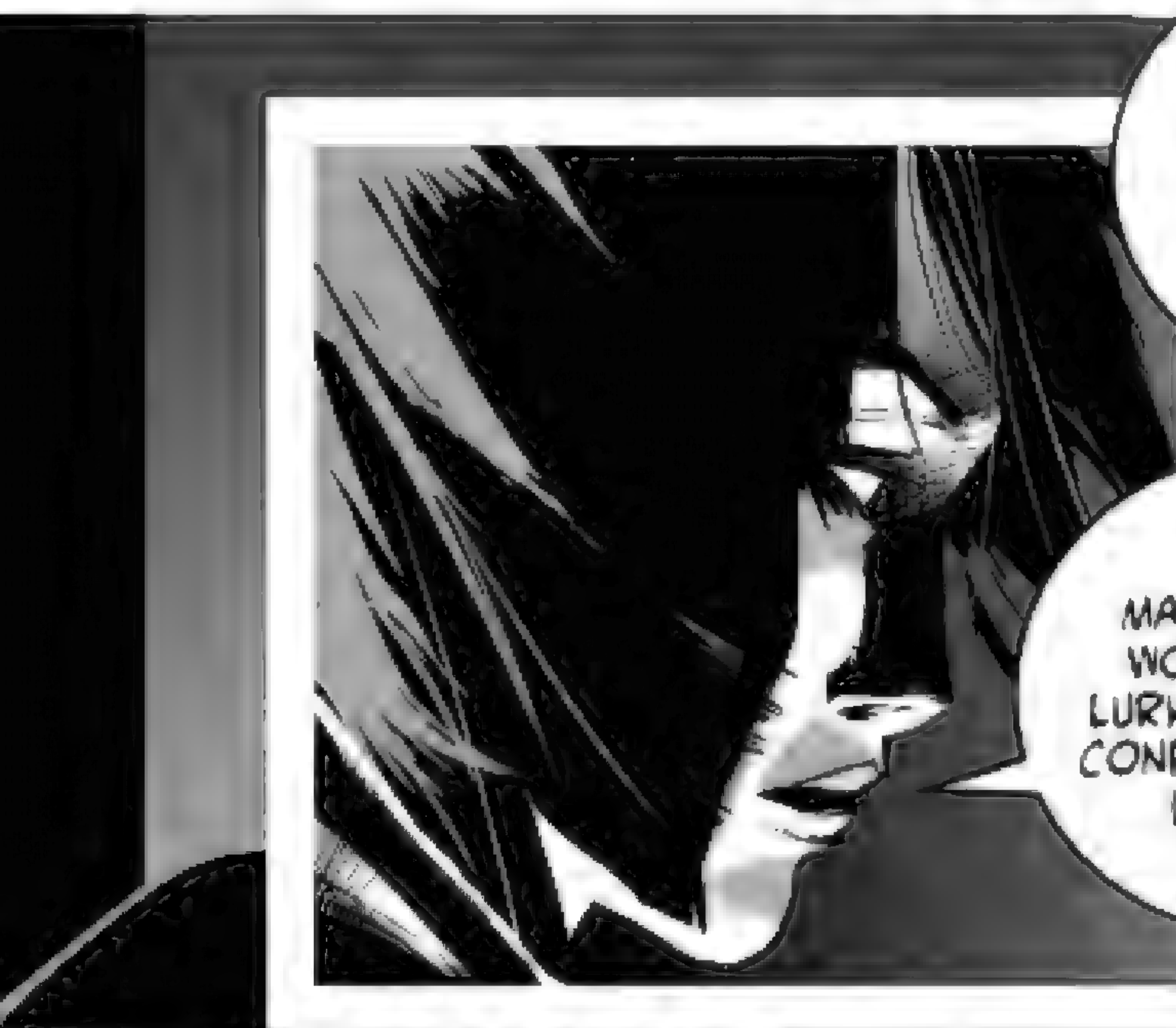
THE VICTIMS ARE MARIANNE DE LOS SANTOS AND RAYMOND TOMAS. LAST SEEN COMING OUT OF THE LAST SCREENING OF "FULL MOON MASSACRE."

SO, ALEXANDRA, IS THIS SOMETHING UP YOUR ALLEY...

...OR SHOULD I JUST CHALK IT UP TO SOME PSYCHO-JEALOUS LOVER?



HOW MANY MEN OUT THERE ARE JEALOUS ENOUGH TO CLAW AND BITE THROUGH HER ABDOMEN?



COULD IT BE THOSE LOW-FLYING LADIES FROM QUIAPO?

NO. MANANANGGAL WOULDN'T BE LURKING AROUND CONFINED SPACES LIKE THIS.

WHATEVER ATTACKED THEM WAS REALLY AFTER HER.

LOOK AT THE WOUNDS OF THE GUY. HE WAS JUST BITTEN ON THE CROTCH, THEN THE ATTACKER BIT HIS THROAT. HE WAS DISPOSED OF. TAKEN OUT OF THE WAY.



THE ATTACKER SPENT MORE TIME ON THE GIRL.



WE ALSO
SAW THIS TRAIL OF
BLOOD. MAINTENANCE
GUY SAID IT ENDS UP IN
THE SEWERS. THE PIPES
ARE TOO SMALL FOR
A PERSON TO
FIT IN.



UNLESS
THEY CAN
SQUEEZE
THROUGH
IT.



KEEP
ME UPDATED,
CAPT. GUERRERO.
I HAVE TO
VISIT SOMEONE
WHO KNOWS A LOT
ABOUT SQUEEZING
THROUGH TIGHT
PLACES.



ROBERTSON MALL.

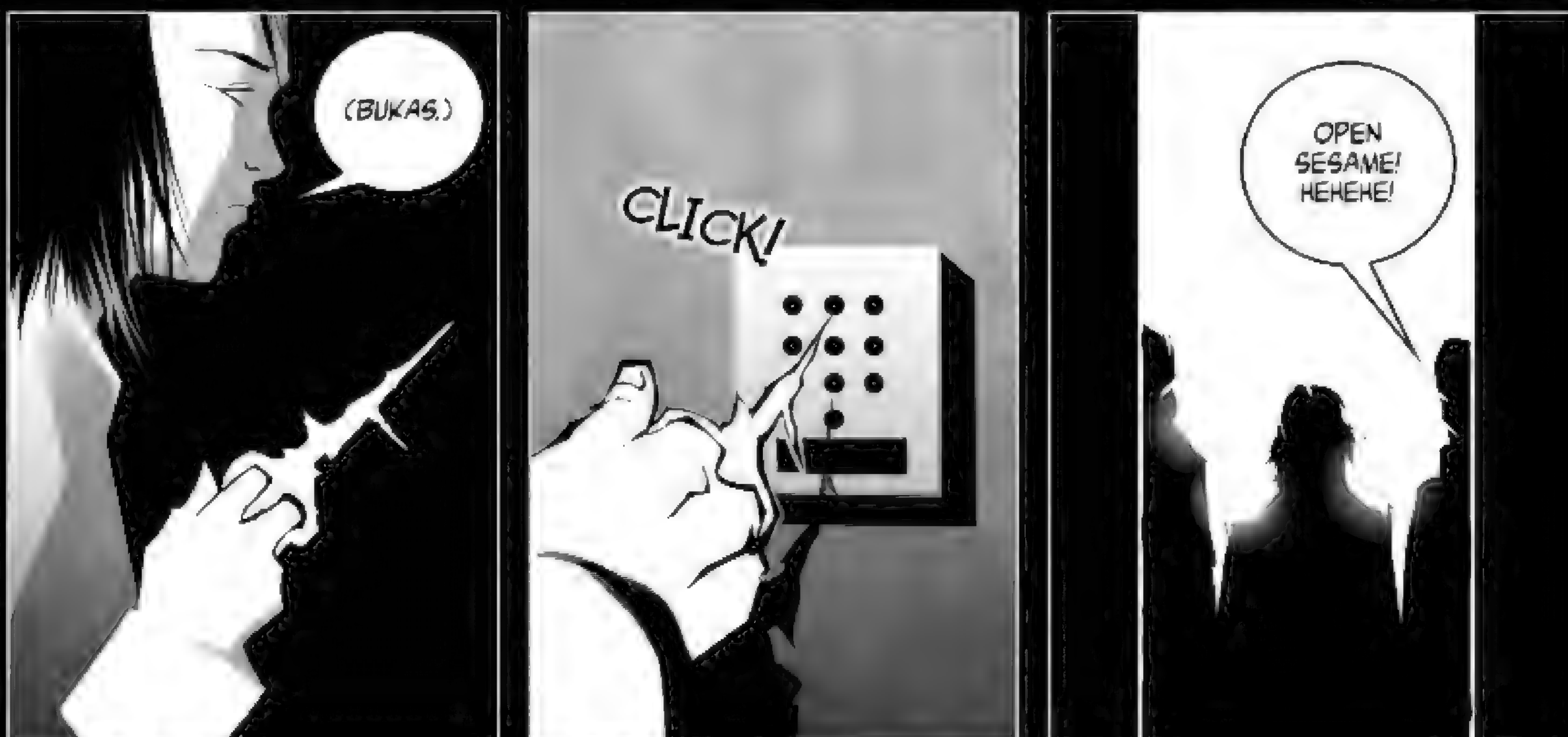
FIVE BLOCKS NORTH
OF THE MAGNA MALL.

BOSSING,
ARE WE HERE
FOR THE MIDNIGHT
MADNESS
SALE?



YEAH,
I COULD
USE A NEW
SUIT.

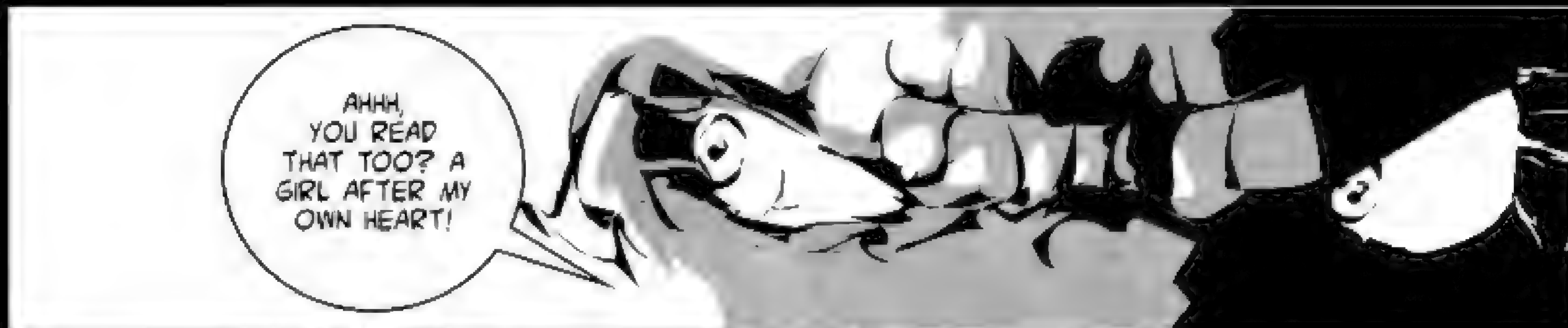




ALEXANDRA
TRESE! I AM
SO DELIGHTED
YOU CAME FOR A
VISIT. WELCOME
TO MY SHADOW
GALLERY.

JEREMY,
YOU RIPPED
THAT OFF FROM
"V FOR
VENDETTA."





AHHH,
YOU READ
THAT TOO? A
GIRL AFTER MY
OWN HEART!



WHERE
WERE YOU LAST
NIGHT BETWEEN
11PM AND 12
MIDNIGHT?



HMMM...
LET'S SEE...
I THINK I WAS
PARTYING WITH
TIM YAP AT THE
EMBASSY.



DON'T
PLAY WITH ME,
JEREMY.

WHERE
ELSE WOULD I
BE? I WAS HERE!
IN THIS WONDERFUL,
FULLY-FURNISHED JAIL
CELL MY FATHER HAS
SO GRACIOUSLY
GIVEN ME.



WHY
IS IT EVERY
TIME SOMETHING
WEIRD HAPPENS
IN A MALL, YOU
ACCUSE ME?



I'M
THROUGH
WITH THAT WHOLE
"PULLING GIRLS OUT
OF THE DRESSING
ROOM" ROUTINE. THAT
WAS JUST A PHASE.
I WAS YOUNG. I
WAS CURIOUS.



BESIDES,
ALL THE GIRLS
WERE RETURNED
SAFE AND UNHARMED.
ONE OF THEM
STILL EMAILS
ME.



YOU
THINK I KILLED
THAT GIRL IN MAGNA
MALL? AND WHY IS IT
WHENEVER TWO OR MORE
PEOPLE DIE, THE PRESS
IMMEDIATELY CALLS IT
A MASSACRE?



YOU
DIDN'T GO TO
THE MAGNA MALL
LAST NIGHT?





LOOK,
IF I EVER GOT
CAUGHT THERE, MY
DAD WOULD PROBABLY
CUT OFF MY INTERNET
CONNECTION. THEN
WHAT'S A POOR, LITTLE,
RICH DRAGON LIKE ME
SUPPOSED TO
DO?

SO,
WHO DID
IT?

SOMEBODY
WHO LIKES
RAW FLESH!



I LIKE MINE
WELL-DONE.

IF YOU
REALLY WANT
TO KNOW WHERE
THE CRAP CAME
FROM, DON'T
LOOK DOWN--



LOOK
UP!



ARCHITECTURAL
PLANS FOR
THE MAGNA MALL?
HOW'D YOU GET
THESE?

FATHER
ALWAYS WANTS
TO KNOW EVERY-
THING ABOUT THE
COMPETITION.
HEHEHE



THAT'S
ENOUGH, MISS
TRESE.

HI DAD!



MR. GOTIANLEUNG,
GOOD EVENING.

AS
MUCH AS I
OWE YOU AND YOUR
FATHER FOR BEING
SO DISCREET ABOUT
JEREMY'S MISDEEDS,
IT DOESN'T MEAN
YOU CAN BARGE IN
HERE ANYTIME
YOU PLEASE.



SIR,
ANYTIME THE
UNDERWORLD
INTERFERES WITH
THE LIVES OF
PEOPLE TOPSIDE,
I GO WHERE
I NEED TO
GO.



BYE-BYE,
ALEXANDRA!
TEXT-TEXT!

FARMER'S MARKET, CUBAO.

NO,
I WON'T
DO IT.

BUT,
ERNESTO,
YOU'RE THE
BEST TRACKER
IN TOWN.

ERNESTO,
MY GRANDFATHER
HAS BEEN ORDERING
FROM YOU EVER
SINCE THE DIABOLICAL
OPENED. AM I NOT
YOUR FAVORITE
SUKI?

THE LAST
TIME I HELPED
YOU OUT, I ENDED
UP WITH A BROKEN
ARM AND A BROKEN
NOSE. THAT ALMOST
PUT ME OUT OF
BUSINESS.

THIS TIME,
I PROMISE THE
KAMBAL WILL NEVER
LEAVE YOUR SIDE.
YOU'LL BE WELL
PROTECTED.

SURE
THING,
BOSSING.

MAGNA MALL.
BASEMENT LEVEL 6.

11:13 PM.

YOU SURE
WE'RE THE
ONLY ONES
HERE?

YES, I HAD
CAPT. GUERRERO
CLEAR THE
ENTIRE LEVEL.













LET'S GO,
BOSSING!
I'LL RIDE
SHOTGUN!

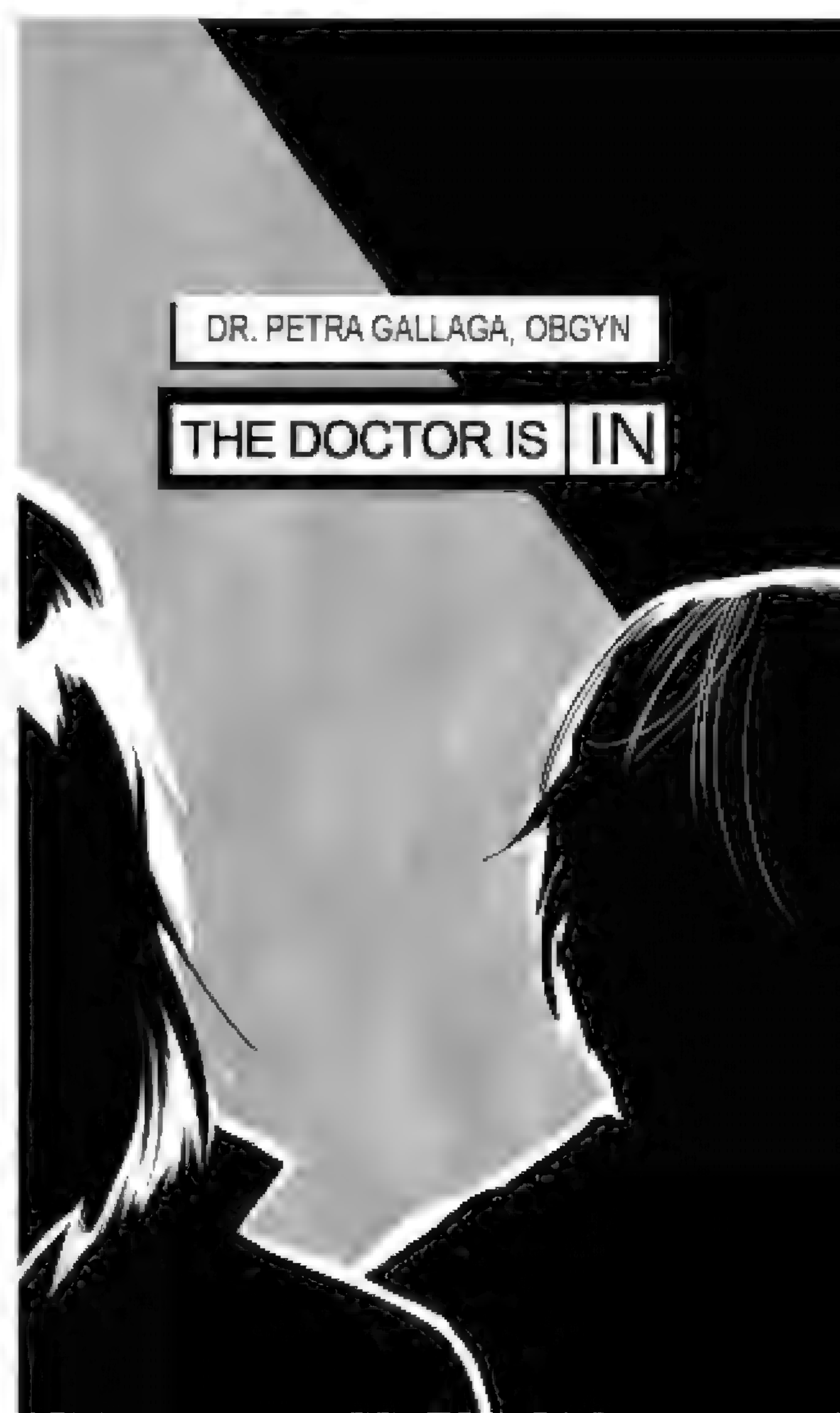


CAPT.
GUERRERO!
HAVE THE ENTIRE
BASEMENT SEALED
OFF! NO ONE IS
ALLOWED TO
GO IN!

HELLO,
HANK, CLOSE
THE DIABOLICAL
AND GET THE
BOYS DOWN
HERE.



YUP, WE
NEED TO DO
SOME PEST
CONTROL.





HELLO,
JEREMY, DOES
YOUR FATHER HAVE
INFO ON THE
TENTANTS OF HIS
COMPETITOR?



JUST ABOUT
EVERYTHING.

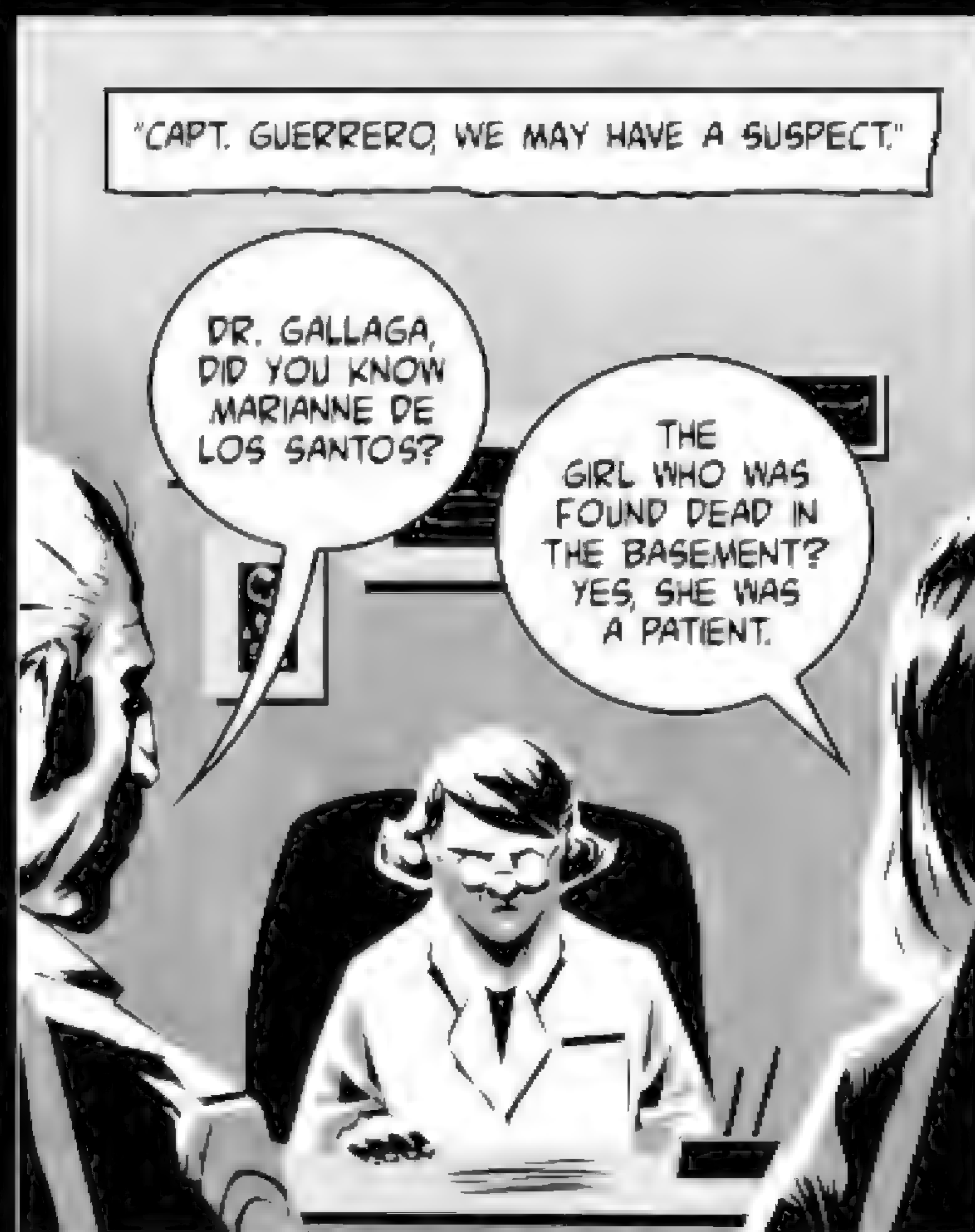
THEN TELL ME
EVERYTHING ABOUT
DR. PETRA GALLAGA,
TENANT OF THE
MAGNA MALL,
SECTION 4-A33..



"ANYTHING CRIME
RELATED.."

NOT HER.
HER SISTER.
DR. GALLAGA'S SISTER
WAS THE VICTIM IN A
RAPE CASE TWO YEARS
BACK. THE SISTER
DIED MONTHS LATER.
COMPLICATIONS WITH
THE PREGNANCY.

OH,
HERE'S
SOMETHING WEIRD:
PAST COUPLE OF
MONTHS, SHE'S
ORDERED SEVERAL
GALLONS OF
SULFURIC
ACID.



"CAPT. GUERRERO, WE MAY HAVE A SUSPECT."

DR. GALLAGA,
DID YOU KNOW
MARIANNE DE
LOS SANTOS?

THE
GIRL WHO WAS
FOUND DEAD IN
THE BASEMENT?
YES, SHE WAS
A PATIENT.



DID YOU
PERFORM AN
ABORTION ON
HER?

ARE YOU
CRAZY? I
WOULDN'T
DO SUCH A
THING!



YOUR
SISTER LORI DIED
TRYING TO GIVE BIRTH
TO A BABY SHE DIDN'T
REALLY WANT. EVER
WONDER IF SHE'D STILL
BE ALIVE IF ONLY YOU
ABORTED THAT
BABY?

HOW
HEARTLESS
CAN YOU
BE?



DR. GALLAGA,
YOU'VE BEEN
ORDERING AN
UNUSUAL AMOUNT
OF SULFURIC ACID.
THAT DOESN'T SEEM
TO BE OF ANY USE
IN YOUR LINE
OF WORK.



DO YOU
USE THE ACID
TO DISSOLVE THE
REMAINS OF
ABORTED BABIES?
DO YOU DUMP IT
WITH THE REST
OF YOUR GARBAGE,
IN THE BASEMENT
STORAGE
AREA?



IS ABORTION
WRONG IF IT'S DONE
TO HELP WOMEN WHO
HAVE BEEN VICTIMIZED?
BURDENED WITH SOME-
THING THEY NEVER
ASKED FOR?

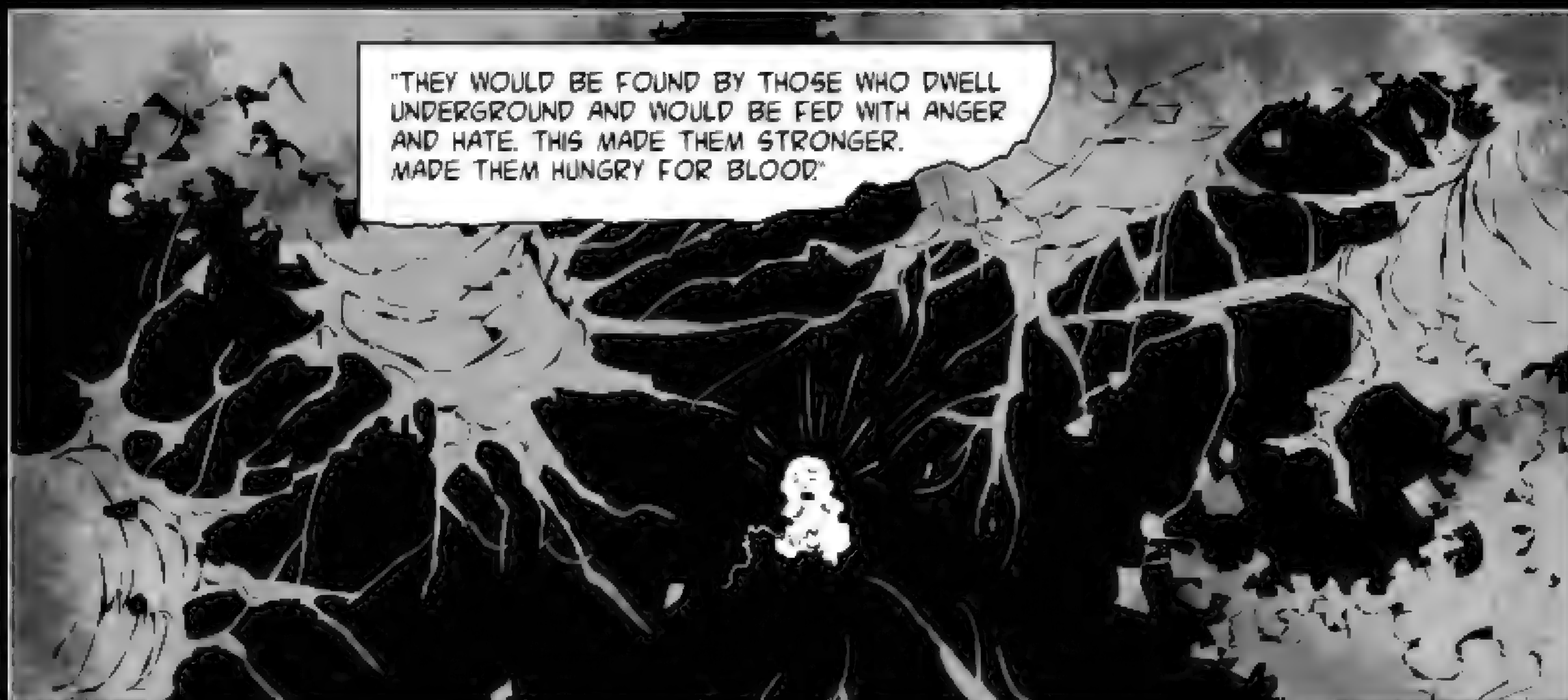


DR. GALLAGA,
DO YOU KNOW
WHAT A
TIYANAK IS?

THOSE LITTLE
GREMLIN
CREATURES?



TIYANAK ARE THE
UNWANTED CHILDREN.
THEY USED TO BE LEFT
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE
FOREST BECAUSE THEY
WERE ILLEGITIMATE
OR BECAUSE THEY
WERE DEFORMED



"THEY WOULD BE FOUND BY THOSE WHO DWELL UNDERGROUND AND WOULD BE FED WITH ANGER AND HATE. THIS MADE THEM STRONGER. MADE THEM HUNGRY FOR BLOOD."



"BUT MOST OF ALL, THEY SOUGHT THE COMFORT OF A MOTHER'S WOMB."

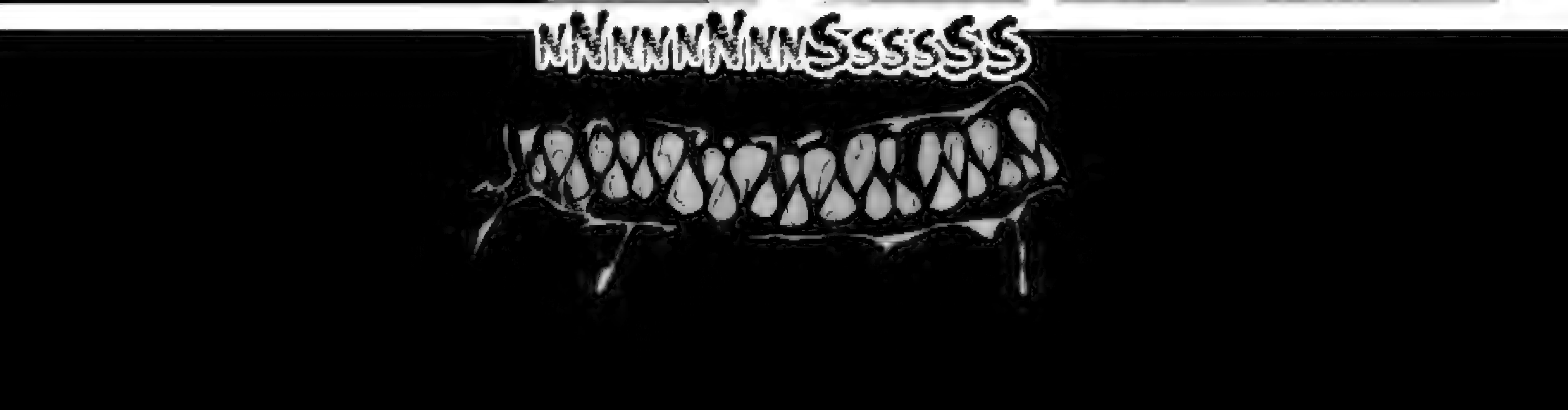
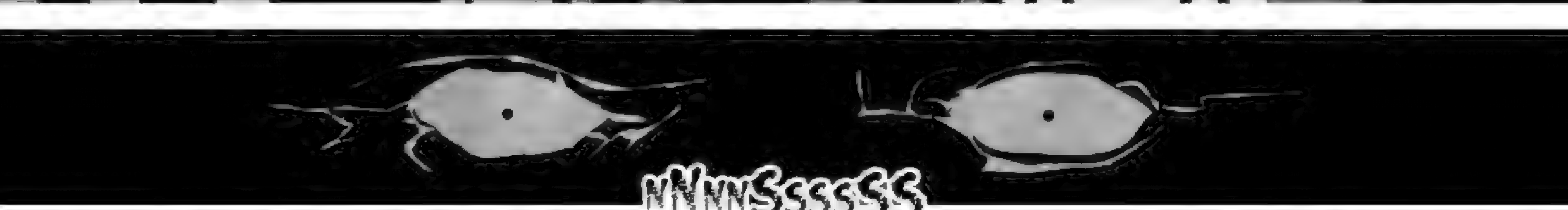


HOW MANY ABORTED SOULS HAVE YOU LEFT IN THE DARKNESS OF THE MALL'S BASEMENT? NOW THEY HUNGER AND KILL.



NONSENSE!

GET OUT OF HERE NOW! I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'VE INTERRUPTED MY WORK WITH CHILDREN'S STORIES!







June 13

The Tiyanak

The common account of an encounter with the tiyanak begins with a baby found in the middle of the forest. The unsuspecting passerby would hear the cries of a lone child. There would be no trace of whoever left the babe and the unfortunate Samaritan would bring the child home.

The next morning, the family in that household would be found dead; suffering from bite marks and clawed-out wounds.

Based on our investigation, and as we have witnessed ourselves, the child transforms into a fearsome creature with razor-sharp teeth and even deadlier claws. Its skin shrivels to a greyish color, resembling a cadaver. The tiyanak attacks with the speed and ferocity of a feral animal.

We've discovered that some tiyanak are a form of maligno -- malevolent, shape-shifting creatures from the underworld, who find ways to be brought into the homes of people to bring them mischief or harm.

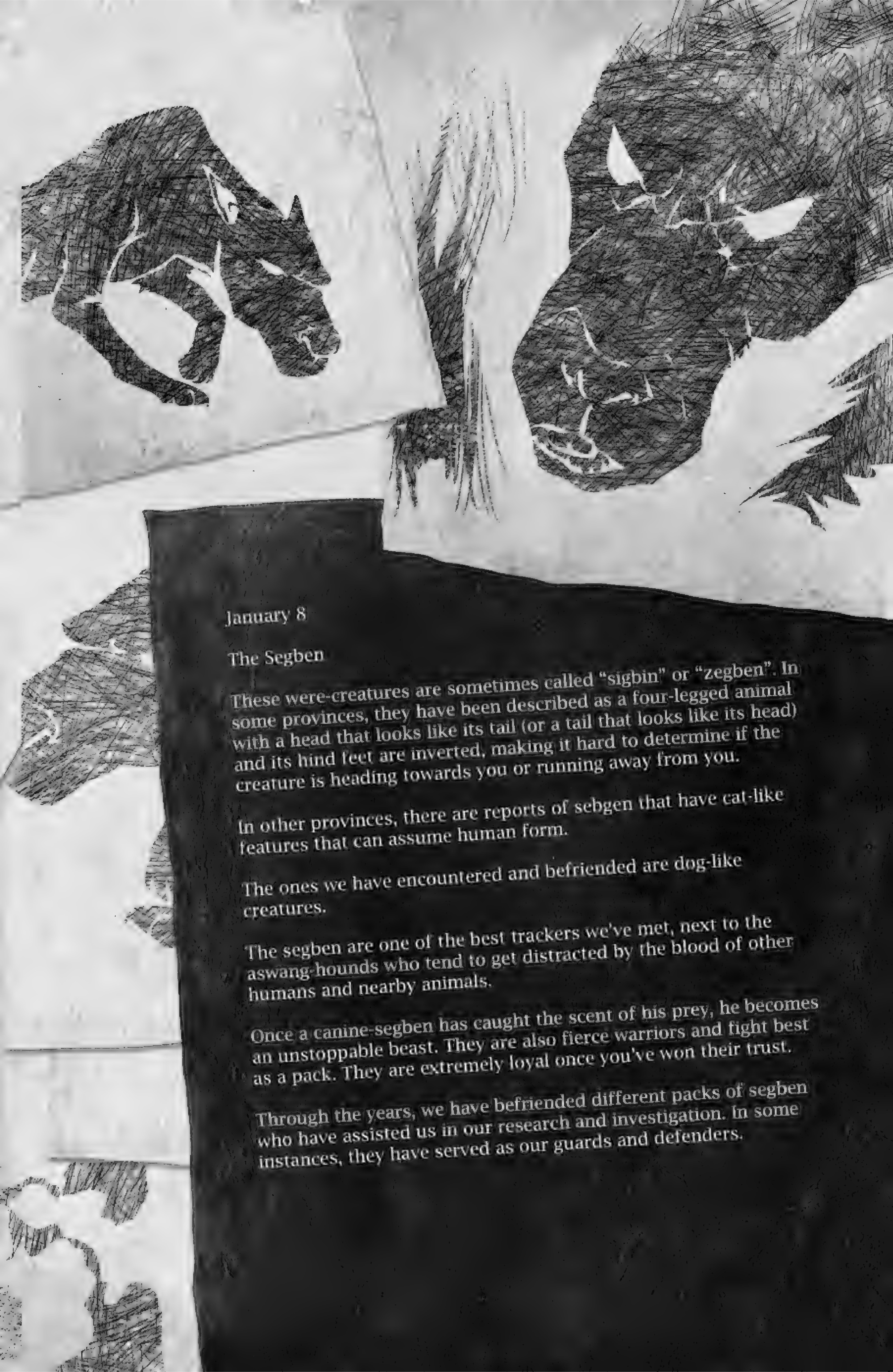
There are some tiyanak that originate from the souls of aborted babies. In the past, the fetus were buried in shallow graves in the forest. With no one praying for their souls, they are left to wander this realm.

The cadaver of the fetus is given a new form by the maligno in the forest and the soul of the lonesome and angry child will seek to return to the warm comfort of the womb.

They seek to be with their mothers and will do anything to feel that loving embrace again, even if it means having to claw their way into the woman's stomach.







January 8

The Segben

These were-creatures are sometimes called "sigbin" or "zegben". In some provinces, they have been described as a four-legged animal with a head that looks like its tail (or a tail that looks like its head) and its hind feet are inverted, making it hard to determine if the creature is heading towards you or running away from you.

In other provinces, there are reports of sebgen that have cat-like features that can assume human form.

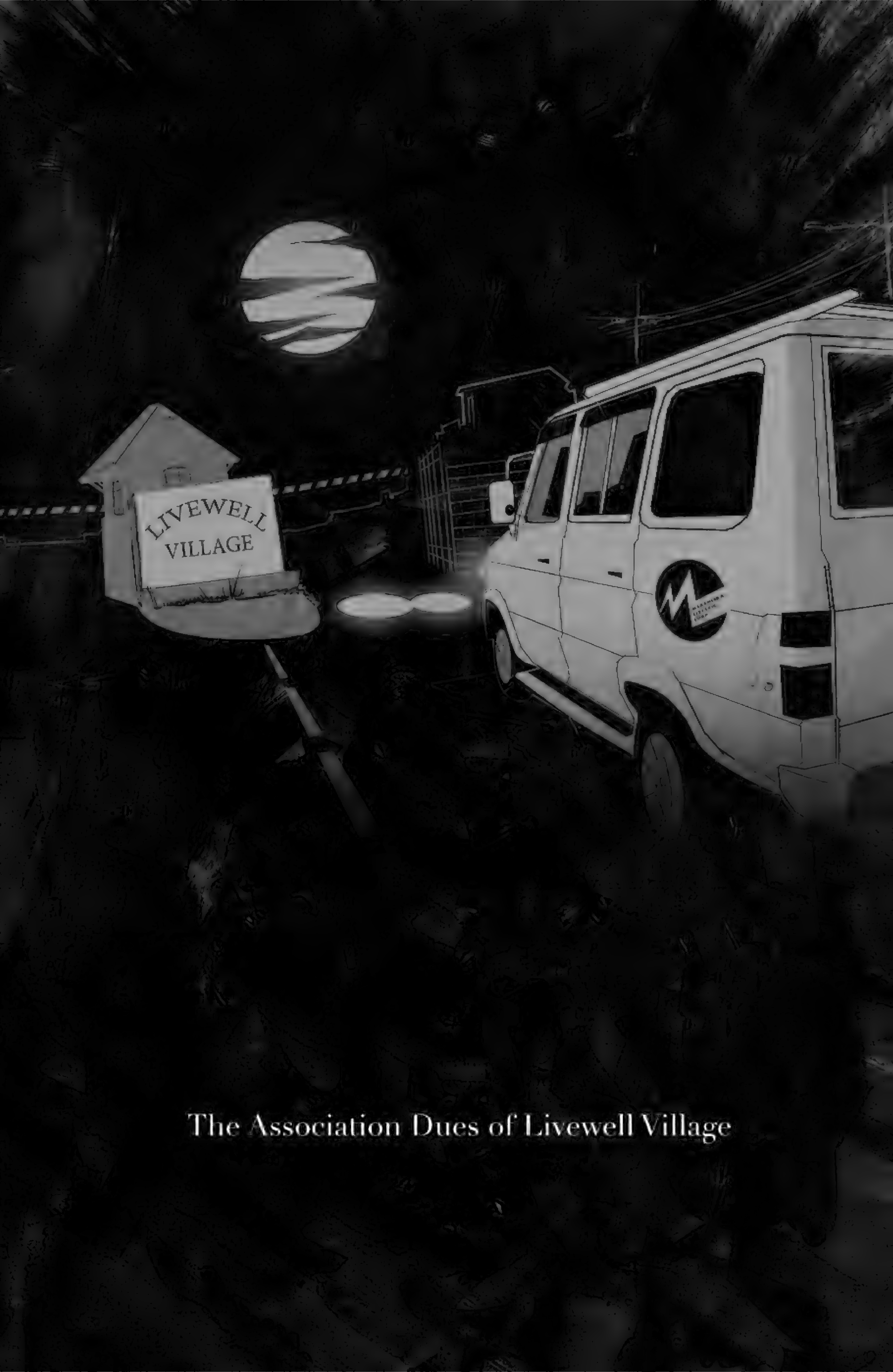
The ones we have encountered and befriended are dog-like creatures.

The segben are one of the best trackers we've met, next to the aswang-hounds who tend to get distracted by the blood of other humans and nearby animals.

Once a canine-segben has caught the scent of his prey, he becomes an unstoppable beast. They are also fierce warriors and fight best as a pack. They are extremely loyal once you've won their trust.

Through the years, we have befriended different packs of segben who have assisted us in our research and investigation. In some instances, they have served as our guards and defenders.





The Association Dues of Livewell Village

Pasig River

J. P. Rizal

MAKATI CITY

BEAVER
BENDO



LIVEWELL VILLAGE LOST
POWER AT 7:59PM.

THE FIRST CALL CAME
IN AT EXACTLY 8:01PM.



AND THEY KEPT CALLING EVERY
FIVE MINUTES TO CHECK IF A
REPAIRMAN WAS ON HIS WAY.



MELCHOR THOUGHT OF
THESE PEOPLE AS
TOO SPOILED.



FIVE MINUTES WITHOUT THEIR AIRCON
AND CABLE TV AND THEY THINK IT'S
THE END OF THE WORLD.



WHICH IS WHY HE
WAS SURPRISED
WITH THE WELCOME
HE WAS GIVEN.



A man in a white shirt and cap is pointing his right index finger towards a large crowd of people. The crowd is composed of many small, stylized faces, suggesting a large gathering.

AFTER HIS MEAL, HE GOT
TO WORK AND TOLD THEM
EVERYTHING WAS GOING TO
BE OKAY.



A close-up of a woman's face, looking upwards with a slight smile. She has dark hair and is wearing a dark jacket. In the background, other people are visible, including a man with a beard and a woman with long hair.

OF COURSE, THE PEOPLE
OF LIVEWELL VILLAGE KNEW
IT WAS GOING TO BE OKAY.

IN FACT, IT WAS
GOING TO BE
BETTER THAN
OKAY.



A man in a white shirt is holding a glowing, cylindrical object in his right hand. He is looking down at it with a focused expression. The background is dark and smoky.

THANK
YOU.



A night scene of a village. A road leads towards a small house with a sign that says "LIVEWELL VILLAGE". The houses in the background are lit up, and a full moon is visible in the sky.

THEY ALL KNEW IT WAS GOING TO
BE A BRIGHT, PROSPEROUS YEAR.

THE CITY MORGUE



HMMM...



HELLO,
ALEXANDRA...
CAN YOU COME
TO MY OFFICE? I
FOUND SOMETHING
INTERESTING.





HURRY UP, SPUNKY. WHO'S THE BODY?

OUR GUEST HERE IS MELCHOR POLICARPIO. REPAIRMAN OF THE MAHARLIKA ELECTRIC CORPORATION. DIED ON DUTY.



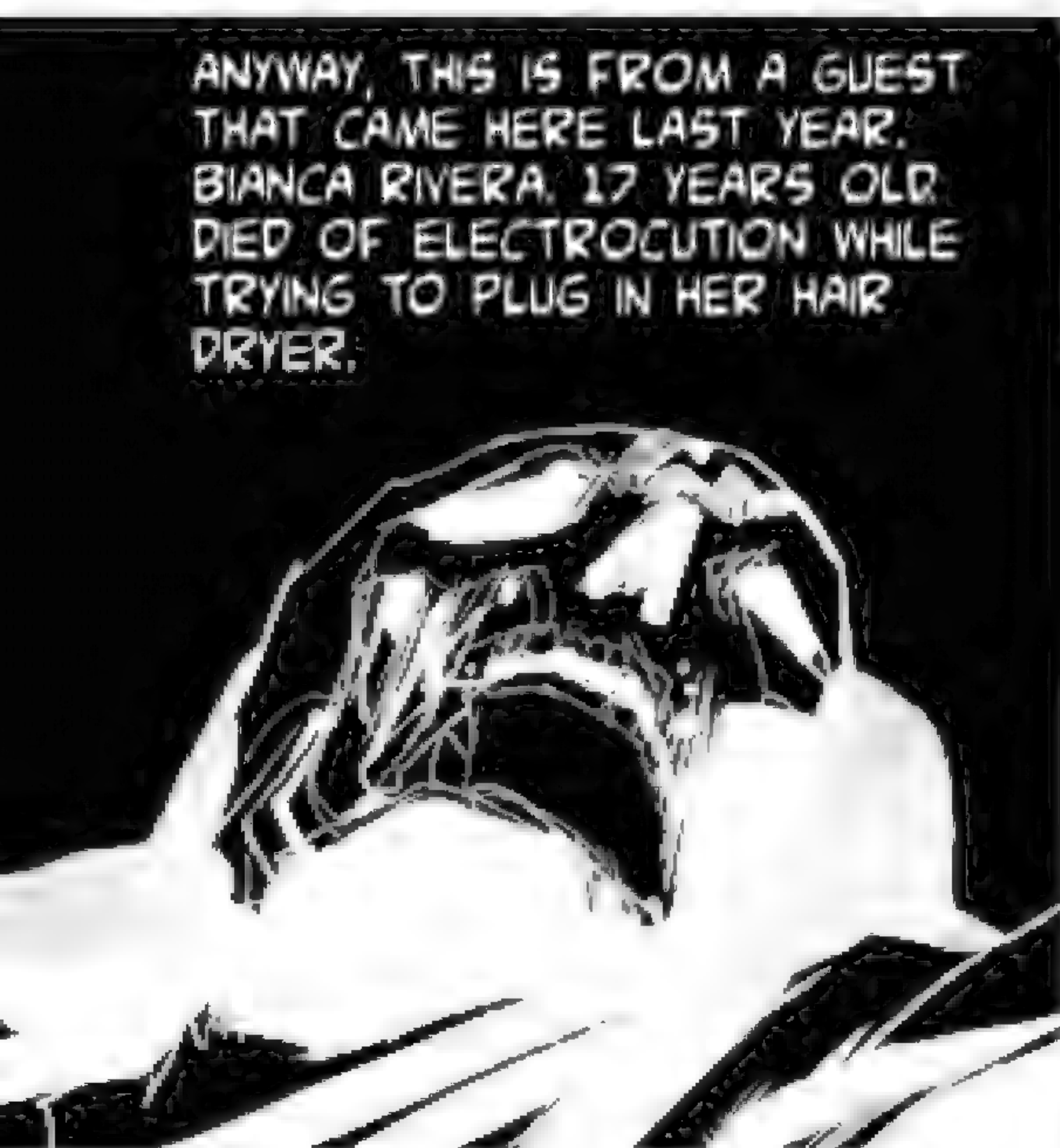
CHECK OUT THIS SCAR AT THE BACK OF HIS NECK. SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN CAUSED BY THE ELECTRICAL DISCHARGE.



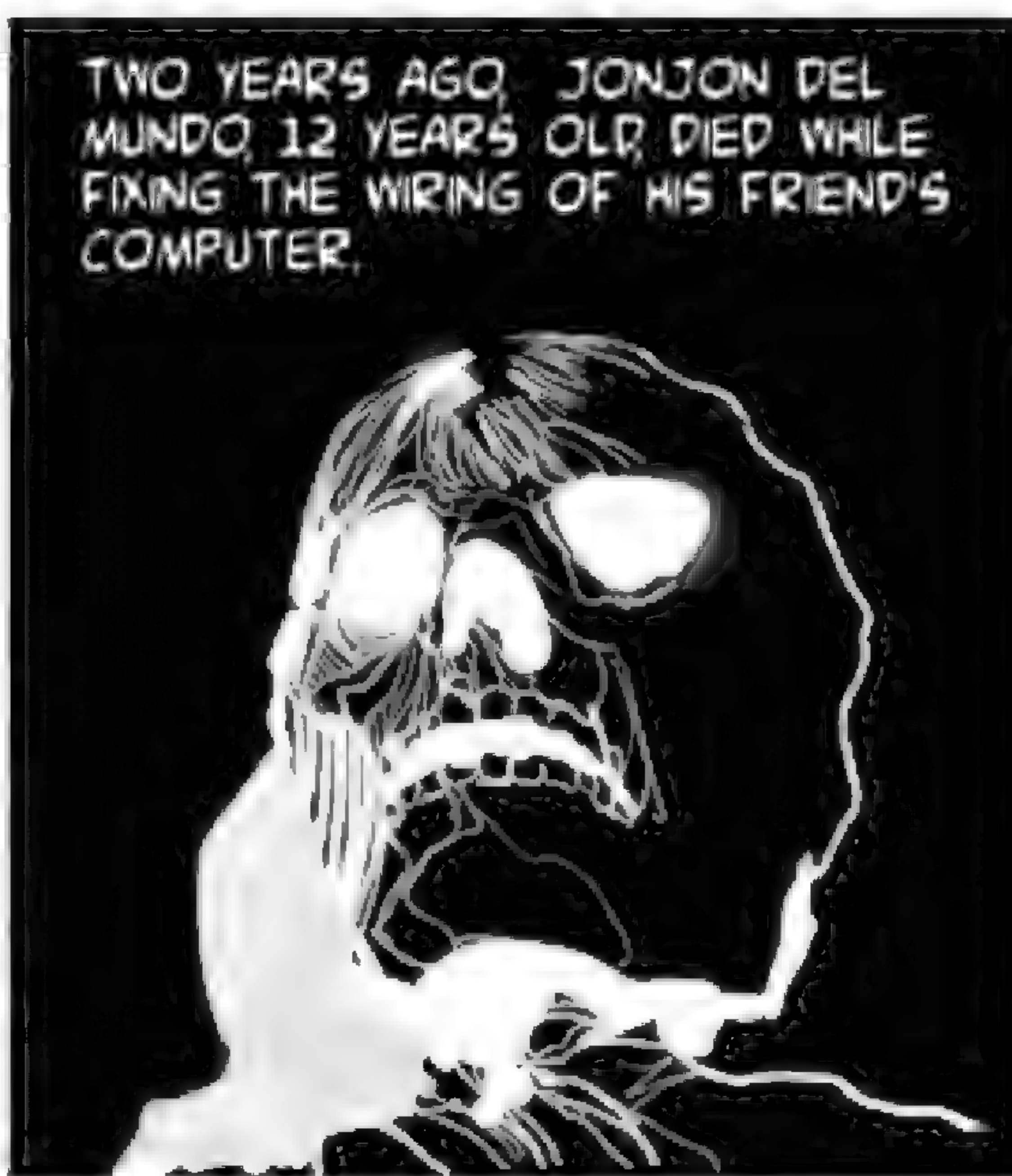
NOW LOOK AT THIS.

YOU KEEP PICTURES OF ALL THE BODIES THAT COME HERE?

IT'S A HOBBY.



ANYWAY, THIS IS FROM A GUEST THAT CAME HERE LAST YEAR. BIANCA RIVERA, 17 YEARS OLD. DIED OF ELECTROCUTION WHILE TRYING TO PLUG IN HER HAIR DRYER.



TWO YEARS AGO, JONJON DEL MUNDO, 12 YEARS OLD, DIED WHILE FIXING THE WIRING OF HIS FRIEND'S COMPUTER.



THREE YEARS AGO, FORTUNATO ALVAREZ, 25 YEARS OLD, DIED WHILE TAKING A SHOWER. HIS WATER HEATER SHORTCIRCUITED. IT ELECTROCUTED HIM.



SPUNKY, HOW MANY PEOPLE DIE OF ELECTRICAL ACCIDENTS IN A GIVEN YEAR?

A LOT! I KNOW! BUT HOW MANY OF THEM ALL GET ELECTROCUTED IN LIVWELL VILLAGE?



ALL OF THEM DIED IN LIVWELL?

YES, MA'AM!



THE NEXT NIGHT...

LOOK, DAD!
I GOT 100
IN MY MATH
TEST!

WOW!
GOOD WORK,
SON!

DAD! MOM!
I GOT INTO THE
CHEERDANCER
SQUAD!

THAT'S
WONDERFUL!

HEY MA,
GUESS
WHAT?

I GOT THE
PROMOTION!



WE ARE
SO BLESSED
WE MUST SAY
THANKS.

ALL IS WELL IN
LIVEWELL VILLAGE.



AMANG PASO, DO YOU RECOGNIZE THIS SIGIL?



IT IS DEFINITELY NOT DUWENDE. BUT IT'S FAMILIAR.

THE LAMAN LUPA SAYS IT MIGHT BE FROM THE TRIBE OF AIR OR THE TRIBE OF LIGHTNING.

THANK YOU, BEFORE I GO, I NEED A FAVOR...



NO WAY IS THAT TACKY LOOKING SIGIL FROM OUR TRIBE!



THAT'S FROM THE TRIBE OF LIGHTNING.



THANKS.

YOU KNOW, THOSE BOYS ARE HOTHEADS. IF THEY GET OUT OF HAND, JUST POKE THEM IN THE EYE. PUTS THEM IN THEIR PLACE. MY LAST BOYFRIEND WAS LIKE THAT.



SO, YOU'RE SINGLE NOW?

HIHIH! YEAH!

LET'S GO.





LET'S GO, BOYS. I'VE BEEN MEANING TO COMPLAIN ABOUT OUR ELECTRIC BILL.



"ALEXANDRA! SO HAPPY TO SEE YOU!"



THE LAST TIME YOUR FATHER BROUGHT YOU HERE, YOU WERE JUST A BABY.



THANK YOU FOR SEEING ME AT SUCH SHORT NOTICE. I WON'T TAKE MUCH OF YOUR TIME.

NO PROBLEM! PLEASE HAVE A SEAT. WOULD YOU LIKE ANYTHING TO DRINK?



NO, THANK YOU. CAN YOU JUST TELL ME WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS SIGIL?



WELL, I CAN'T DENY THAT IT LOOKS LIKE THE SIGIL OF MY TRIBE. WHERE DID YOU FIND THIS?

ON THE BODIES OF PEOPLE WHO DIED OF ELECTROCUTION IN LIVEWELL VILLAGE.



I WILL
LOOK INTO THE
MATTER.

WHAT CAN
YOU TELL ME
ABOUT LIVEWELL
VILLAGE?



AS FAR
AS I KNOW,
LIVEWELL RECEIVES
GOOD SERVICE
FROM US. NO
COMPLAINTS.



SIR, DO
YOU REALLY RECEIVE
ALL THE COMPLAINTS?
CONSIDERING YOU PROVIDE
POWER TO MOST OF THE
COUNTRY, WOULD YOU
REALLY NOTICE SOMETHING
HAPPENING IN A
PARTICULAR VILLAGE
IN MAKATI?



I'M SURE
I WOULD BE
MADE AWARE
OF ANY
ANOMALIES.



PEOPLE
ELECTROCUTED TO
DEATH AND LEFT WITH
THE MARK OF ELEMENTAL
FORCES WOULD, MOST
DEFINITELY, FALL UNDER THE
CATEGORY OF ANOMALOUS.
IT WOULD ALSO BE
CLASSIFIED AS A SACRIFICE
IN HONOR OF THE
ELEMENTAL
FORCE.

HUMAN
SACRIFICE IS
NOT TOLERATED
IN MY CITY.

I'M NO
FOOL, LITTLE
TRESE. YOU DON'T
NEED TO TAKE THAT
TONE WITH ME. YOUR
FATHER WOULD'VE
SHOWN ME MORE
RESPECT.

IF
YOU DID
ALLOW THESE
SACRIFICES, MY
FATHER WOULD'VE
IMMEDIATELY
EXTRADITED YOU
AND DENIED YOUR
TRIBE PASSAGE
TO THIS
SIDE.

I AM
NOT AS
FORGIVING
AS MY
FATHER.

I
WILL BE
BACK.





SO,
YOU'RE THE
ONE WHO'S BEEN
ASKING ABOUT
ME.



I'M
ALEXANDRA
TRESE.

TRESE?
I THINK MY
FATHER KNEW
A TRESE.
I'M NOT
SURE.



WHO
ARE
YOU?

I AM
BAGYON
KULIMLM.
PRINCE OF
LIGHTNING
AND
THUNDER.



PEOPLE
ARE DYING...
GETTING
ELECTROCUTED--
IN THE NEARBY
VILLAGE. ARE YOU
RESPONSIBLE
FOR THAT?



PEOPLE
DYING? YOU
MAKE IT SOUND
LIKE AN
EPIDEMIC.

ONLY
ONE PERSON
DIES EVERY
YEAR.

ALL THE
FAMILIES IN
LIVWELL ARE...
WELL, LIVING
QUITE WELL.
HAHAHA!





EVERY YEAR,
EVERYBODY GETS
A RAISE IN THEIR JOBS.
THEIR KIDS GRADUATE
WITH HONORS. NOBODY
HAS AN AFFAIR. EVERY-
BODY HELPS EVERYONE.
THEY ALL LIVE HAPPILY
EVER AFTER.

AND
YOU'RE
RESPONSIBLE
FOR ALL
THAT?



IT
WASN'T
MY IDEA.



"FOUR YEARS AGO, I CAME. THE MEDIA CALLED
ME TYPHOON ERNING-- WHAT AN UGLY NAME."

"LIKE MOST STORMS, I CAUSED A
BLACK-OUT. I STAYED FOR THREE DAYS.
I EVEN ASKED PERMISSION FROM
MY FATHER BAGYON LEKTRO."



"ON THE FOURTH NIGHT, I HEARD
THE PEOPLE OF LIVEWELL. I HEARD
THEIR WISHES, THEIR PRAYERS."

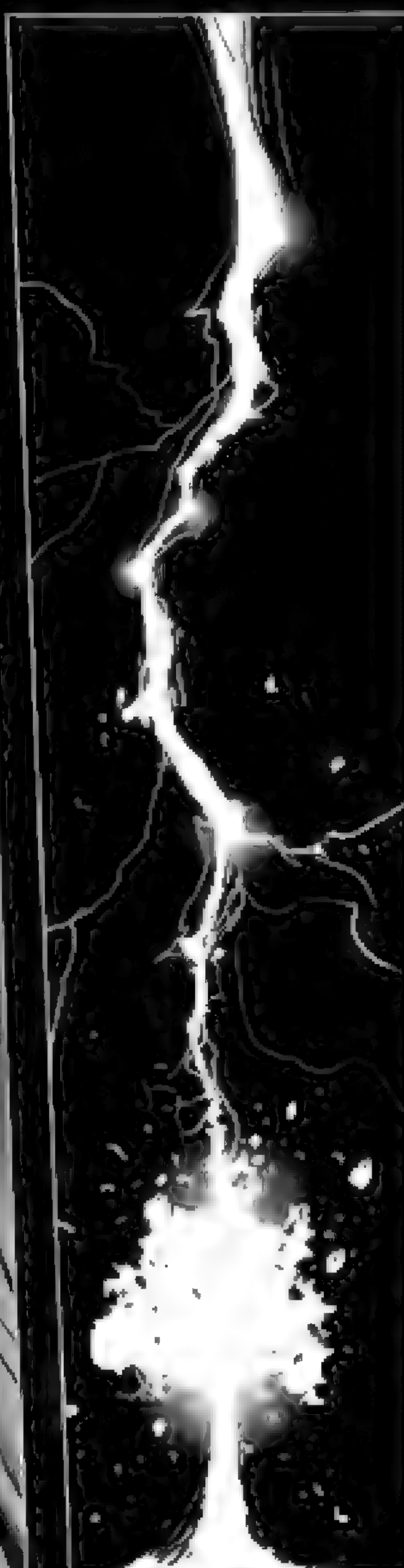
"THEY WHISPERED IT IN THEIR
BEDS AS THEY SPENT ANOTHER
NIGHT IN DARKNESS."

"THEY PLEADED TO HAVE
THEIR AIRCONDITIONED
ROOMS BACK, THEIR
24-HOUR CABLE TV,
AND THEIR ICE COLD
SOFTDRINKS."



"THEN I SAW ONE
MAN CLIMB A TREE."

"I TOOK IT AS
AN OFFERING."



"SO, I MADE A DEAL WITH THE PEOPLE OF LIVEWELL. I PROMISED THEM A PROSPEROUS YEAR, AS LONG AS THEY OFFERED SOMETHING IN RETURN."

EXCEPT THE PEOPLE OF LIVEWELL WISENED UP AND STARTED TO OFFER PEOPLE FROM OUTSIDE THEIR VILLAGE.

I'M NOT A PICKY GOD.

YOU ARE NOT A GOD. YOU'RE A BLACKMAILER AND YOU'RE IN MY CITY.

I'M SHUTTING YOU DOWN!



YOU
ARE MOST
WELCOME
TO TRY.

ZAP



BOOM!!!
SKRAGG!

BLAM!
BLAM!
CRASHHH!
BLAM!

ZZAARRRKKKK!!!

AMANG PASO. ABOUT THAT FAVOR, I NEED IT NOW!

I CAN SEE YOU. GAME OVER.

NOT YET.



GOOD
EVENING.



HAHAHAHA!
AND WHAT ARE
YOU SUPPOSED
TO DO?



HEH!
NOT ME.



THE CONCRETE GAVE
WAY TO THE MUD AND
MUCK THAT WAS THE
LAMAN LUPA.





GHAAH!!!

KZZZZTTTTT



THE NEXT DAY, AT THE DIABOLICAL.

YOU KNOW,
I'M GRATEFUL
THAT AMANG PASO
HELPED US ESCAPE--
BUT THEIR DUWENDE
TUNNELS REALLY
STINK!

QUIET!
HIS LAMAN
LUPA MIGHT
HEAR YOU.

ZRAAADRRKK!



WHY DIDN'T
YOU COME TO
ME, ALEXANDRA?
YOU KNEW YOU
WERE DEALING WITH
SOMEONE FROM
MY TRIBE.

BAGYON
LEKTRO,
GOOD
MORNING.

YOU
COULD'VE USED
THE DOOR.



YOU
EXTENDED
THAT COURTESY
TO THE TIKBALANG
TRIBE, BUT NOT
TO ME?

I
MIGHT'VE
ASKED YOU
TO INTERVENE,
BUT I WAS TOO
BUSY AVOIDING
YOUR SON'S
LIGHTNING.



FATE
AND FAMILY
PUT ME IN
CHARGE OF
THIS CITY. I
WILL RUN IT
MY WAY.



THERE IS
A STORM COMING.
ALEXANDRA, DON'T
EXPECT ANY HELP
FROM ME AND
MY TRIBE.

ZAARRKKK!!



HANK,
GET THAT
CEILING FIXED AND
ASK MR. LAO WHAT
HE CAN DO ABOUT
BEEFING UP SECURITY
AGAINST LIGHTNING
ELEMENTALS.

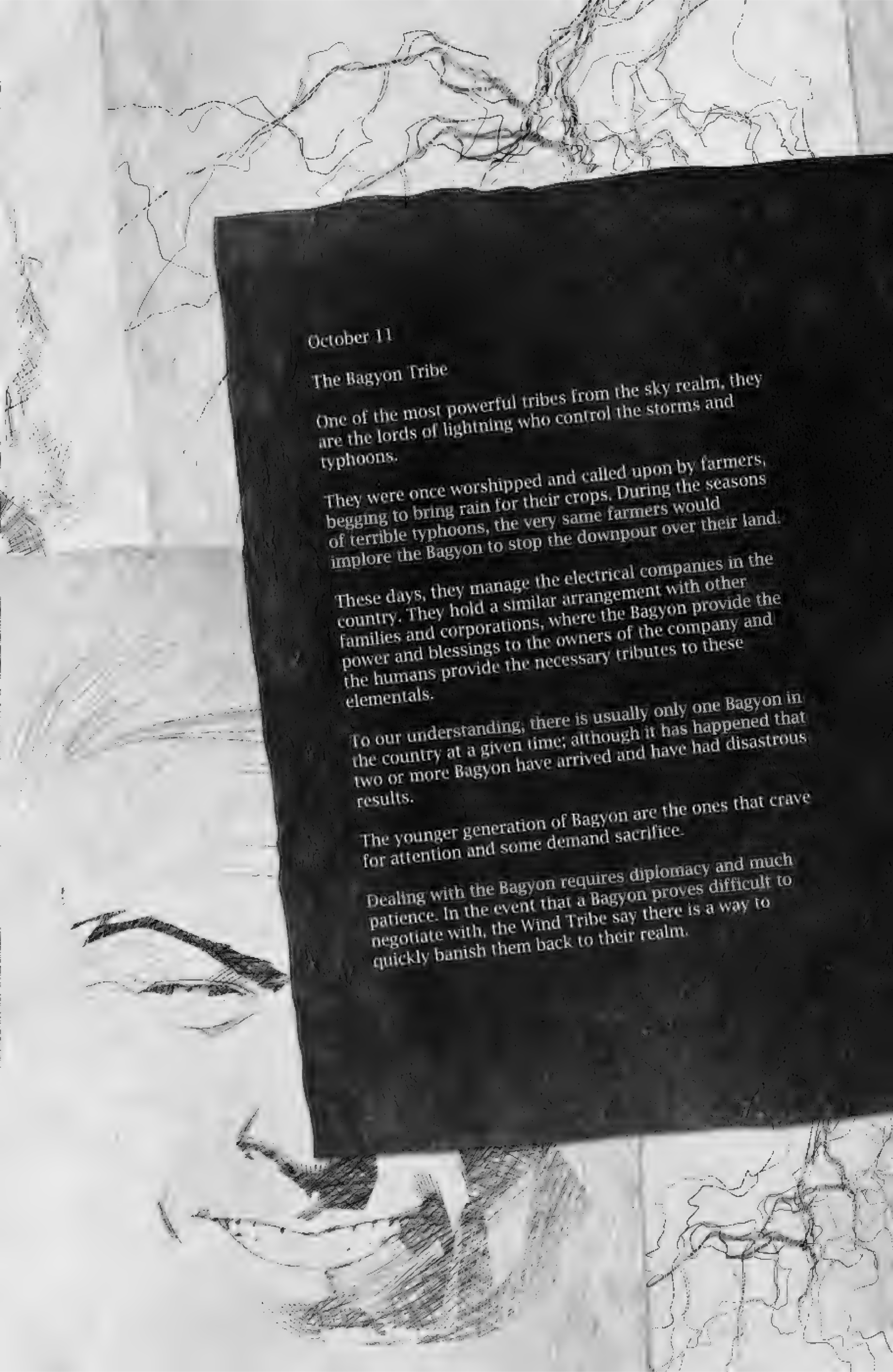


SURE THING,
BOSSING.

SKK RAGGH-BOOM!







October 11

The Bagyon Tribe

One of the most powerful tribes from the sky realm, they are the lords of lightning who control the storms and typhoons.

They were once worshipped and called upon by farmers, begging to bring rain for their crops. During the seasons of terrible typhoons, the very same farmers would implore the Bagyon to stop the downpour over their land.

These days, they manage the electrical companies in the country. They hold a similar arrangement with other families and corporations, where the Bagyon provide the power and blessings to the owners of the company and the humans provide the necessary tributes to these elementals.

To our understanding, there is usually only one Bagyon in the country at a given time; although it has happened that two or more Bagyon have arrived and have had disastrous results.

The younger generation of Bagyon are the ones that crave for attention and some demand sacrifice.

Dealing with the Bagyon requires diplomacy and much patience. In the event that a Bagyon proves difficult to negotiate with, the Wind Tribe say there is a way to quickly banish them back to their realm.

A F T E R W O R D

You've just had the dark little pleasure of reading Budjette Tan and Kajo Baldesimo's "Trese." Something I wish I had written myself.

I met Budjette Tan in person in the mid-90's at a comic art exhibit in Robinsons Galleria. He introduced me to a great bunch of local comic book creators, writers and artists and what was evident from day one was his level of enthusiasm when it came to local comics. While he had created his own titles and characters, Budj was always a source of encouragement and support to the guys in Alamat—and to me as well. He'd always ask us if we were writing something at the moment or when we'd work on follow-ups to our individual projects.

Kajo, I met when he was but a skinny teenager drawing up a little storm of his own at the Virtual Media studios in Pasig. Kaj was always the silent type but his quirky sense of humor and his skills as an artist speak out on the pages of his work. I remember one camera crew interviewed him and asked what advice he could give the aspiring artist. His answer: "Just draw. Draw and draw and draw. And when you don't want to draw, draw some more."

Budjette and Kajo have traveled far and grown as comic book creators, with TRESE, they're able to create characters, places, scenarios and situations that both embrace and capture a Manila that's supernatural, gritty, mysterious, that's bizarrely real and near to me. References abound left and right that are so uniquely Manila—from the streets, places, personalities to stories from our collective consciousness. Moreover, at the core, the stories of Trese deal with very real emotions—fear, vengefulness, desire, restlessness, and heartbreak whether it's a human or a mythical creature feeling it.

Driving one night after re-reading the first eight issues of Trese, I passed by the streets of Metro Manila thinking, you know somewhere in this crazy, absurd city, beneath the grimy streets, within the endless stretches of tightly packed buildings, behind secret passageways and unmarked doors, I felt sure a slew of strange things were going on, and if Trese got a call for each and everyone of them, her phone wouldn't stop ringing and like the city, she wouldn't get any sleep.

Karen Kunawicz
11.05.08

Karen Kunawicz is a pop culture columnist, rock journalist, poet, dark elf, cosplayer and tarot reader. She claims that the secret to immortality is chocolate milk, grilled cheese sandwiches and staring at pictures of Johnny Depp.

Based on a true story

If this is your first time to read TRESE, then I'd to say "Welcome!" If this is your second TRESE book, then let me say "Welcome back!"

We hope you have enjoyed our second tour of the dimly-lit side of Metro Manila.

All the stories in this book were inspired by stories that I heard from family and friends or some obscure piece of news buried in the back pages of the main section.

"A Little Known Murder in Studio 4" was inspired by my mother's story about a popular actress from the 1970s who suddenly rose to fame. It was supposedly because she had a "pet duwende"; which made me think, what if the actress was the "pet" and the duwende was her "master"?

The idea for "The Outpost on Kalayaan Street" came from a reader's question asking "Where are all the corrupt cops in Trese?" This got me thinking about the stories of policemen who get paid to investigate (or not to investigate) certain cases.

While thinking about this question, we used to attend Sunday mass at a church that was right beside the Manila South Cemetery. I once walked around the area and discovered the lone police outpost in that precinct. And that's how the story of corrupt cops at the cemetery came about.

"Embrace of the Unwanted" started out as a tale to reveal the truth to the story about the SnakeMan that supposedly lived under the Robinsons Galleria mall.

In the 1990s, rumors started to spread about women who supposedly disappeared when they went shopping at that mall. As the story goes, the women would enter the changing room to try out some clothes, when suddenly a trap door would open underneath and they'd end up in the lair of the SnakeMan.

This reptilian was supposedly the son of the owner of the mall. Since the mall was owned by a Filipino-Chinese, it made me wonder, what if the creature wasn't a SnakeMan but was actually a humanoid dragon? And what if the case of the disappearing women was actually due to a tiyanak in the mall?

Lastly, "The Association Dues of Livewell Village" came from the true story of a powerplant that exploded in the area of Rockwell Village in Makati City.

The other inspiration for this case happened during one of those big typhoons that flooded Manila and caused a power failure in the city.

So, the more affluent families checked in the nearest five-star hotel which had electricity thanks to their power generators. At the lobby of the hotel, someone overheard a little kid complain that the hotel didn't have his favorite cartoon channel and how terribly disappointed he was about it. That anecdote sparked the idea of a neighborhood that was willing to sacrifice anything ... anyone, just so they can keep living the comfortable life.

Do you have any interesting stories about your city?

Budjette Tan
February 2021
Billund, Denmark



Budjette

I want to thank the following writers / creators who continue to share their knowledge and interest in Philippine myth and folklore through their websites:

<https://www.aswangproject.com/>

<http://www.rocketkapre.com/>

<http://phspirits.com/>

Kajo

Thank you God, for using me to tell stories.



When dusk arrives in the city of Manila,
that's when you become
the most likely prey of the criminal underworld.

Kidnappers and thieves will be the least of your worries.

Beware the criminals that can't be bound with handcuffs
nor harmed with bullets.

Beware the ones that crave for your blood,
those who hold your heart ransom,
and the ones that come to steal your soul.

When crime takes a turn for the weird,
the police call **Alexandra Trese**.

*"If you know nothing about Filipino horror and the monsters that lurk within,
this is the place to start." --BOOK RIOT*

*"The unconventional monster art and moody, action-packed narratives
make this horror-crime series a must-follow for any aficionado of the macabre."
--PUBLISHERS WEEKLY*

*"Trese adds new life to the supernatural genre, elevating traditional stories
passed down through countless generations across the Philippines.
Tan's imaginings are the key to unlocking the gates to these little-known tales
and making them universal, while Baldisimo's mind-blowing art is something
to behold — a superstar artist, waiting to be discovered." --SYFY WIRE*